"CROSSROADS"

FALL, 2000 VOLUME 3, ISSUE 1

"A MAGAZINE FOR TRANS-GENDERED PEOPLE & THEIR FRIENDS"

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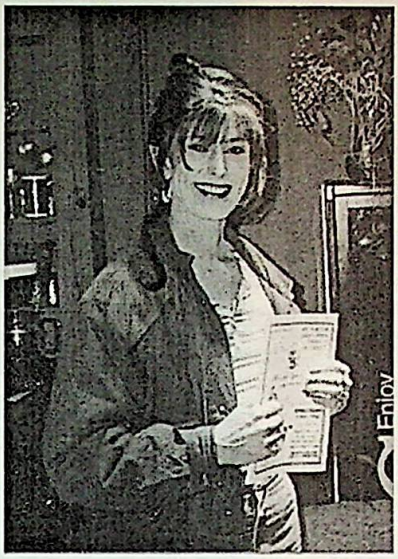
IF YOU WISH TO SUBMIT AN ARTICLE OR LETTER TO CROSSROADS .....MAIL IT TO:

MICHELLE HART: SITE 9, BOX 17, RR # 1, OKOTOKS, AB. TOL-1T0 or e-mail to: mhart@webminder.com
Visit online at: www.crossroads-magazine.com

Meet Ms. Monica Brown, Taking it easy at an informal photo shoot. Some day we'll show you the pic of her riding one of the Symons Valley bulls at the "Gay Rodeo" **Feb 2, is Monica's Birthday,** ***Happy Birthday Monica!***

The Editors Corner



Hi Grrrl's,

You know what, I'm munchin' on a roast beef sandwich here, and wonder'n what to say! As you know, it is not as if I don't know how to say something, rather, the real problem is that there is too much to say and I don't know where to start. So many emotions. I guess I will just start with the obvious and we can all proceed from there.

The first order of business is to point out that the colour of this issue of the third volume of Crossroads is the same as the very first issue. When we started Crossroads I didn't know that we would all be able to get this far, and since we have, this is our way of marking that point on our path.

The last issue was written, as were all of the predessors, in all honesty. Yet it turns out to have been a provocative issue such as I thought it would be when I published it. The responses were immediate. The results were nothing less then amazing. This issue is choke full of the responses of some of the readers of the last issue that took the time to put a pen to paper.

New writer, Rachel Juana Cruz (and I love that name) provides an interesting perspective on the new question of what is wrong with just being a transvestite. Rhiannon writes on page 18, to answer the question of the after life of becoming a trans-sexual women. Michala, responds to Gina's article, Tranzexuel Personae with a poignant letter to the editor. As your editor, all I can say is that I am in awe! I ride a great horse, and as I hang on to his mane, I love his stride! Good on you guys! Good on you. We wrote. You reacted! Good on you! Heeyaa! Keep going, the results are important. Heeyaa!

There is another article in this issue which at first glance will be discounted by the majority of people. I would ask you to give Lakota Winkte a good read. More than once if necessary. In my estimation, although in my view it is not the writers intent, it does describe the transsexual emotion very well. So give it a read, and then read it again! In this issue, Coreen responds to Grace's question about tattoo cover. Alison Terry confronts the internet in "Virtual Freedom," Chris/Tina relates a funny yet poignant personal experience in her story about the "Forno Queen," and "Wicked" Wanda Mechant submits the Blonde Joke on page 21. Fantastic, and I could say that over and over again. ***Fantastic!*** Just call me Michelle Van Der Zalm! Billy always used to say it, but of course he never meant it.

I am very happy at this point to tell you that the cross-dressing club known as Masquerade from Winnipeg has joined Crossroads and is taking a forum page. As they continue we will perceive that we have places to go and people to meet in Manitoba. Fantastic! I would encourage the readers of Crossroads in Manitoba to continue to contribute their experiences, so that others from away can benefit from their experience. Welcome aboard members of Masquerade, we are pleased that you are here.

Once again this year I traveled back to Saskatoon to take the wheelwright course. You know what, I think I will be doing it forever. One of the reasons is that you can never learn enough about something you love, and that's cool. The main reason is that I love the team work and being part of a team that works together to accomplish something. It is in my estimation wonderful to be a giver of answers and an asker of questions all at the same time. Plus it is good for the soul to be in a situation where you have to measure up every once and a while.

It was really funny this year, that the three small guys (me included) were doing the big heavy wagon wheels, while the big guys were doing the little stuff. I guess in the scheme of things, size does not really matter. In the end the little guys' got their work done. I was a presenter this year and gave a discourse (short seminar) on the care and operation of the band saw. It went well. I just did my thing, but for days afterwards, people kept coming up and thanking me. It was in some ways an unreal experience because I was not prepared for the depth of their response to my presentation! So I said exactly what Bren had counseled me to say in such circumstances. I said thank you! However it was kinda' hard to be often ninth in line to use my own saw. Aw, such are the joys of success.

Things are changing at Illusions in Calgary once again. One can only hope that the current changes are for the better. I think they are if people will continue to support it. Clubs may be started by individuals but they are maintained through the collective efforts of the membership. Good luck in your new efforts Illusions Calgary.

Starting with this issue, volume three of Crossroads will back up and once again and start providing topical up to date information for those still in the closet, just getting ready to leave it, or have just come out. There is not enough paper or giga-bites available in the world to address the issues that confront these fragile individuals. I have said before that Crossroads will always be committed to the needs of the novice. It is not possible to deal with these issues just once and be able to say that is enough. There can never be enough. Each day, at different times through out that day, trans people are born into this world. As they begin to grow, the uninvited dilemma manifests itself and their life starts to go right straight to hell. Of course the intensity of their personal hell depends on their environment. For a long time they are alone with their emotions. Good information is what they need to make a good escape. Balance and separation are the tools they will use to keep their lives in proper perspective after exiting the closet if they know about them. Continued relevance and productivity will be the coin of their future lives if they are among the lucky. **Best Wishes, Mi-**

Readers Letters...

Dear Michelle,

I would just like to say, bravo Gina! Finally someone has spoken the way I feel. It concerns me that so many are willing to throw away their current status in search of what they perceive to be something better. As many of you are aware Michala has been on somewhat of a hiatus for the past 7 months to enable her to evaluate her situation. I too wondered if things would be better if I took the step and lived life as a girl. In the time I took I realized that this would have been a very grave mistake and am glad I distanced myself. I think I have found my balance and it is time for Michala to re-surface and this is why I feel I must speak out.

It upsets me that so many of us are choosing to tread the path that at one time was the "one less chosen". This is spurred on by confining ourselves to one interest and over zealous "doctors". Although our transgenderism is very important to us we must remember that there are many things in life to explore and to limit ourselves to one activity is harmful. I understand that **some** of us are "born the wrong gender" and should live life as a female but many of us aren't. It is very easy to get confused by spending too much time in the T-Community and obsessing on our transgenderism. I should know it happened to me.

We shouldn't limit ourselves to one life as there are many to live. Spending every spare moment running around downtown Calgary in a skirt isn't exploring life, it is simply living one. We need to experience life, relax, and somehow get back to point where our femininity was a gift and not a burden. We also need to stop justifying our crossdressing by claiming to be transsexual. We are who we are and if the world can't handle our female personae then too bad for them, and we aren't required to be transsexual in order to wear a skirt.

It is not my intention to offend anyone but these are feelings I felt I had to put to paper. It worries me to see so many people getting lost when it isn't necessary. I guess in a way I wish things were the way they were when I first came out. But they can't so its time to move on.

So, whether you like it or not, you will be seeing a little more of Michala in the future, but not too much. Life is short, live it to the fullest!

Sincerely, Michala Cross XO

Dear Michala,

Although I am sure that not everyone will agree with your opinion, you make some good points. I am happy that you have found your path, I hope we will continue to meet along the way. **Sincerely, Michelle**

Dear Michelle

I came across your info on the Illusions page and I just had to send you this message. There are so many similarities in our lives. I have dressed since I was about six, first in my sisters clothes and then in my mother's and now my wife's. I have bought bits and pieces over the years and then thrown them away in disgust. Now I have reached 51 and with a midriff which is spreading, I have still not reached my ambition.

All I ever wanted was to spend sometime in clothes that fit, and look convincing and maybe share this with similar people. My wife is totally against CD/TV's, no tolerance at all. I have tried believe me. I am so happy that you and I know that there are many others who have achieved this with a supportive partner.

I just want to say that I think that you look gorgeous in your pics, relaxed and confident of your own state.

Lots of love and kisses, **Veronica xxx**

PS. *I am in the UK, a long way from Alberta, "A long way from Alberta" good title for a song or poem? Maybe?*

Dear Veronica,

Your right on two counts, I am a very lucky person and there are others who are also enjoying their crossdressing and healthy relationships as well. You might be interested in knowing that in my case I was finally prepared to exit the closet, with or without my partners help. I was prepared to arrange things so that my activities would not be in her face if she so wished and would not have changed my commitment to our relationship. Luckily this was not a necessary requirement in my case.

Best Wishes, Michelle

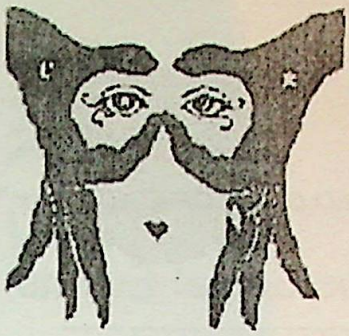
Hi Michelle,

I've heard lots about you from my friends, Beverly Johns and Shirley Armitage. I've been reading the mag for almost a year, and I really enjoy the variety in it. You sound like a busy girl, with dozens of irons in the fire. I hope that someday we'll meet!

In the meantime I am submitting an attachment for the next issue of Crossroads. Take care, Michelle! **Sincerely, Rachel**

Hey Michelle!

It was really wonderful to hear from you again! I'm glad to know that you and Brenda are doing well, and ditto for the magazine, etc. Please feel free to reprint anything you like from my web-site. It's quite outdated and I have loads more to add, but time has been at a premium these days. I am commuting back and forth from Providence to Mexico researching my dissertation. If you do publish anything by me, can you send me a copy (even just a photocopy) for my files? I would be quite pleased to write something for you comparing my experiences between Calgary and Providence; I could also add on my ...**continued on page 31**



MASQUERADE of WINNIPEG

MANITOBA'S CLUB FOR THE CD/TV/TS LIFESTYLE

About Masquerade

We are a support group for cross-dressers, transvestites, and transsexuals. Our purpose is for people with like/common interests to associate and socialize. It is not for the purpose of soliciting or engaging in sexual activities. All gender gifted individuals, who are 18 years of age or older, and are prepared to respect our bi-laws, are welcome. Spouses and significant others are encouraged and welcome to attend meetings and functions and join if they wish. We regularly meet the 2nd Tuesday of every month in the basement of Lady Godiva Boutique. The meetings begin around 7:30 p.m. and go until 9 or 10. Refreshments, but no alcohol, are served. A $3.00 due is charged to help cover costs of the tea & coffee, etc. that are provided. We endeavour to maintain a very friendly, laid-back atmosphere. We are all there for the same reasons-a place to go to that is accepting, private and relaxing. Change facilities are available. Dressing for the first meeting or two is not required, but encouraged!

To Contact

MASQUERADE

e-mail to:

shandi_strong@hotmail.com

A big thanks to copy editor Brenda Hart and photo providers Jodee, Chris/tina, Michelle and Coreen

Presidents Message

By: Shandi Strong

Hello! We the girls of Masquerade would very much like to thank Michelle for extending the opportunity to us here in Winnipeg to be a part of her wonderful magazine. We are happy to be a part our growing community and hope to share what we can to make it a better place for everyone.

We have existed as a club here in what is presently "Winterpeg" (It's currently minus 30 as I type this!) for almost four years. Our membership hovers around 30 people including spouses, with one half to one third regularly attending meetings. Our monthly meetings involve anything from just talking or watching educational videos to workshops and guest speakers. Our favorite event is a visit from our three friends from the Shoppers Drug Mart Cosmetics department with helpful tips and techniques. They are great people and love cosmetics even more than I do!

Outside our monthly meetings we love having parties at member's homes. No real reason required other than to get together, but we've had movie nights, photo nights, Birthday, Christmas and New Years parties and more! A few of us more outgoing girls enjoy going to the bars here. We have four that are totally accepting and have regular drag shows that we've attended and even participated in. We've made some fun friends in the Snowy Owl Monarchist Society, who run the shows to raise money for charities. We even ran one of our own and raised $100.00 for the Village Clinic.

We publish a quarterly newsletter called "Lipstick & Lace", which contains members bios, stories, beauty tips, photos, puzzles and more!

As president I can't say enough about the value of our type of groups, and how important it is to let other CD's, TV's and TS' know that we are out here. I know how alone and afraid I was thinking I was "the only one" (even though my wife has always been incredibly supportive). Being a part of Masquerade has brought empowerment and peace to my being. I have done so much more than I ever thought I could since joining and my only wish is that more of us could know those good feelings upon discovering the person we really are. **Shandi**

Illusions

"THE TRANSGENDERED CLUB OF CALGARY"

"Illusion" Web Site Address: www.illusions.ab.ca

B & B Leatherworks Web Site Address:
http://www.cadvision.com/bnbleatherworks/
Empress VIII, Jodee's Email Address:
jodeee@home.com
Jodee says, contact me if you just want to chat... have ideas for the club.... stories for these pages or "Transmission." Anything.....

"ILLUSION"

IS A CLUB FOR THE TV/TS LIFESTYLE

PROVIDING A SAFE, DISCREET AND WELCOMING ATMOSPHERE FOR TRANSVESTITES, TRANSSEXUALS AND THEIR SUPPORTERS. WE PROVIDE GET-TOGETHERS WITH LIKE MINDED PEOPLE.

WE MAINTAIN A CODE OF CLUB DISCRETION, CONFIDENTIALITY AND CLEANLINESS. SPONSORED GUESTS ARE WELCOME.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT OUR EXCITING SOCIAL CLUB,

PLEASE VISIT OUR WEB SITE!

Illusions Social Events!

Remember all Illusions socials begin around 7:30. Entry is $6 for members and spouses, $10 for non-members and guests. Please BYOB and if you have any snacks you'd like to bring you'll have a captive audience.

Saturday, February 10, Valentines Party
A week of love and new home to love. Come celebrate our new party room and the warmth of friends.
Friday, February 23, Clothes shopping at Illusions. We have a stack of cool, sexy clothes for sale. 50 cents for tops and accessories and $1 for dresses. All proceeds to Illusions. Do you have any clothes you need to download. Bring them down to Illusions.
Saturday, March 10, Open House-Free to all Illusions friends.
Friday, March 30, Regular Social-Party theme to be announced

Illusions News By: Lisa Fryklund

So much has happened at Illusions lately and the changes are exciting. Firstly, our long time benefactors B&B Emporium have split the business. Barbie's Shop is now located on 4th street SW and Christine's B&D Emporium will remain at the same location as B&B.

Christine has offered Illusions to stay with her at B&D. Her proposal allows us to decorate the club as we deem appropriate, we will have our own security system and we can meet as often as we wish and leave when we wish. We were also offered the contents that Christine and Barbie purchased for the Illusions room.

B&D is only going to take on one side of the old B&B business so that means we will be taking over the space on the other side of the wall from the current Illusions space. This new space is larger, it has a smoking area that is indoors and we will have a doored room which will be the new make-up/changing area (shades of our original pink party room)plus a stage for all you prima-Donna's.

When we got into the room it consisted of four dark brown walls. Now it has evolved into a lovely light purple party room with a new bar, stage, spot lighting, speaker towers and white makeup room. It really is worth seeing to believe. The call to volunteers was co-ordinated by Jodee who was also our master carpenter, risking her fingers and time to create a new look to the bar and stage. She has devoted dozens of hours to build our new space and her devotion should be noted. Assisting Jodee in giving much of their time have been Princess Joanne (shopping and painting), Gina (painting, painting and painting), Lisa (Electrical and painting), Dana (painting and donations of glasses, lighting towers and spot lights)and Kerry (construction). Also out for painting and assistance have been Teri, Dana 2, Elaine, Wilma and Bobbi. Apologies to anyone missed who have helped or are about to help after writing of this article. Illusions may not expect it's girls to come work but we do expect them to come out and enoy the facility. Illusions meetings commence in our new ...continued on page 7

CD's for TG's Make-Over

The Ideas Simple I'm a Crossdresser I just Love to have My pictures taken, I love to take Pictures of my friends I love to go shopping help girls with make up whether you're a Novice, or whether you're a old Pro, lets go shopping, lets take some pictures,

- Shopping
- Makeup
- Photos

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Or Email Me @ Jodeee@home.

Dare to be Different

By: Bobbi Dare

Which bathroom should I use? The men's...yuck! The women's...hummm...better, but for who? Well, if you're out in women's clothes it's definitely better for you cause going into the men's can be dirty, not to mention scary and possibly dangerous for us Transgendered folk. But let's try to look at this from a different perspective for just one second.

I'm not shy about using the ladies room when I'm out in drag at a gay bar...I mean even though there were straight people there I figured they must be 'hip to the scene.' Well, apparently not everyone. I was out one Friday night at this club and I had to use the facilities. When I entered the bathroom it was empty, and since the place wasn't that busy I guess this is not unusual. While I was washing my hands two girls came in. Now, this place has a nice big mirror, so one went over to the mirror and her friend came over to the sinks. I noticed that she was looking at me, then she retreated back to her friend over by the mirror. I heard the words, '...oh my god...' whispered. Now maybe I'm just being paranoid... but I don't think so. They were clearly uncomfortable with my being there. I finished up quickly and left. A half-hour later I watched a group of drag queens use the same bathroom.

I discussed this with a good friend of mine and she told me she couldn't really blame the girls for reacting that way. Most women consider the bathroom a retreat of sorts. It's a place where they can talk things over privately with their girlfriends. It's a place without men. That's the bottom line. There is a trust issue around this whole bathroom use thing. She described the feeling like someone staring at you from the next urinal while you're trying to pee. I'm not sure how she came up with that analogy.

Another time I was out at yet another gay club...can you guess how I spend my weekends...and I didn't meet any women there who had a problem with cross-dressers using the ladies room. In fact there were also gay men using the ladies room. In fact there were women using the men's room...well you get the picture. The women I ran into in the bathroom were actually really nice, we complemented each other, exchanged greetings...you know the usual. Many of them were drunk, so that helped with the icebreaking... there was no ice-breaking required.

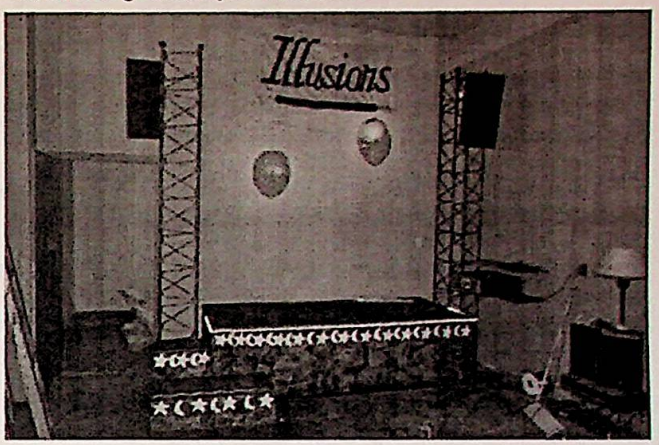
For most people though there does seem to be a clear divide. The men use the men's room and the women use the ladies room. But what about us...the ones who don't quite fit with either male or female. I know I wouldn't feel comfortable using the men's washroom while out as Bobbi. Does than mean I should be using the women's? I was at a movie theater a couple months ago in drag and I remember thinking that I was glad I didn't have to go...because I wasn't comfortable going in either place.

I think that the problem might be the way the bathroom is used. Many women retreat to it to discuss men. A woman will discuss the men who have been hitting on her and discuss what she should do about it with her trusted friends. She does not want any of this private information shared with any men until such time as she has chosen a course of action. That's my theory anyway. I think I'd feel the same way. If I was discussing the gory details with my friends about some hunky guy, then one of his friends comes in and uses the bathroom, hears our conversation, and our conversation gets back to Mr. Hunk then I know I'd be embarrassed. It's trust. You trust that another woman would not do this to you...but guys...no.

Hugs, Bobbi Dare

Illusions news continued .... space on February 10th for our Valentines Party. Very appropriate for the club we love. We will be having an open house to all Illusions friends and past members on Saturday March 3rd which will be free admission. Party starts at 8pm. There will be food and entertainment on the new stage. Don't miss this one.

Check out our updated web site at **www.Illusions.ab.ca**, it looks great. *See you at Illusions!*



Underconstruction, stage area at the new Illusions room

A very special thank you to all who contributed to Crossroads over this past year. Without your help and energy Crossroads could *not have succeeded!* Visit the new Crossroads Web pages @ www.crossroads-magazine.com

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Illusions Social Club of Edmonton

How to contact
The Illusions Social Club of Edmonton

Mailing address: Illusions Social Club
Box 356, Main P.O. Edmonton
Alberta, T5J – 2J6

Voicemail phone line: 1-780-988-3294 ...leave your message
or
Phone the GLCCE Centre on Tuesday between 7.00 & 10.00pm at 1-780-488-3234 ..... Ask for Rachel Carmina

Regular meetings are held at the GLCCE Centre, 10612 – 124 St. Edmonton, on the second Thursday of each month. Meetings usually begin between 8.30 and 9.00 PM. All are welcome!

A new website is being prepared, the address should appear in the next issue of Crossroads, ...LOOK FOR IT!

Edmonton's Fall & Winter Social Events!!

January 11, 2001— ***Shopping trip to the "Unique Boutique"***

February 24, 2001— ***Annual General Meeting/ AM, prelude to Winterfest 2001, at the Garden City (host) Hotel***

Editors Quip: For those of you from Edmonton who have never attended the general meeting of the Illusions Social Club, be on notice, Michelle, the editor of this mag from Calgary has attended every one from the beginning! So Grrrl's get competitive! Be there and make your mark!

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Western Canada's Magazine for Trans-gendered People and Their Friends

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EDMONTON ILLUSIONS
PRESENTS
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INQUIRE ABOUT SERVICES AVAILBLE IN THE IMMEDIATE DOWNTOWN AREA (IE; SALONS,NITE-CLUBS, ETC)

As We grow!

As we grow in our acceptance as cross-dressers;
Do we find that our tastes have changed?
Ask yourself these questions to find out.

- How many girls' feel that their taste in feminine clothing has changed?
- How many girls' feel they are still dressing in the same clothes they owned 3 - 5 years ago?
- How may girls' have never purged, how many more than once, if so how many times?
- What did you find the hardest thing about having purged? How long did you last?
- Do you find you buy different after each purge and if so how?
- Linda, once asked me "what I enjoy most about crossdressing? What!
- How many feel that it is when dressed as a male; this is when they are crossdressing and why?
- I know that most, if not all married crossdressers, own more lingerie and clothing than their spouse, is that true?
- Do any of you girls' cut out the nylon lining that goes with lined skirts, so you can wear your favorite slip?

Hints, Hints & More Good Hints

- **Baby wipes are a great item to use to remove make-up.**
- **A clear coat of nail polish makes it easier to remove polish, plus it smoothes out the nail, therefore you require less nail colour. A second coat of clear will give the chosen colour depth.**
- **You should always curl your eyelashes before you apply mascara, not after.**
- **If you can't shave your legs, a good pair of neutral coloured panty hose (colour will become apparent with experience) worn under a second pair of the choice of your presentation for the evening, will in most cases cover the leg hair.**
- **For those that have to wear foundation garments, or more than one pair of panty hose, try to remove with scissors the cotton gusset. By doing so, you retain all your shape, but gain the easy convenience of using the facilities when your have to.**
- **For a cheap pair of falsies, water filled balloons (good to buy the best quality) covered with the right length of panty hose will give bounce and shape. If the balloons are folded correctly, they can also give the look of real nipples.**
- **Now realize, that if after receiving all this info you decide to purge, it will likely cost you 50 times over to get going again. So, if you feel you have to purge, then leave everything with a friend, ...*because you never know!!!***

Barbie Speaks, as editor of the Edmonton Newsletter

From the files of the Editor; My computer just crashed, I lost the letter I had just written. However when en femme I am so much an easier going person. I find that I am more relaxed.

Now this will be totally different from what I wrote before. One good thing is that it improves my typing skills. I am up to 60 words a minute, soon I will try 2 letter words.

I know that the letter lost was perhaps my best piece of work, however I lost it, but someone must have it. As I have no idea where it went. However I enjoy looking down at my brightly polished nails as they dance along the keys. Truly girls' it sounds better than truth, you could enjoy drinking a coffee or two in the time it takes to write this short piece. You could actually grow the beans too.

Don't get me wrong I enjoy writing this letter and putting it together. It is all worth the time and effort, to hear some friendly laughter over some silly story or the "I didn't know that" over an editorial, however it all crashes down faster than the computer, when someone picks it, glances through it and says "don't you have spell check".

I was talking to a girlfriend the other day, and was asked if I had ever purged. Stating that I have I suppose 5 - 6 times. She informed me that she never had and wondered what the entire problem was. I told her I find it easy to do...the tears come after.

I am getting so exited as another season is once again upon us. I say season as it seems every September we get to see girls' we haven't seen since last spring. This could be because the B-B-Q season is over-those nosey neighbors are spending time indoors, it's getting darker earlier, so we get braver. Whatever the reason-Welcome back girls".

I also find that there seems to be more and more groups getting in touch with each other. I have read newsletters from Winterpeg or Waterpeg, actually Winnipeg. I am becoming closer to them through their newsletter "Lipstick & Lace". Where were you girls' when I used to take those lonely walks en femme, through the parking lots by the zoo (stopped by the park police one night, another story, and funny now), also Xpressions from Toronto, we have made friends with groups in Ottawa, the Maritimes, Vancouver etc. So if you just read the newsletter to find my mistakes, you may never know that you were in a city with some friendly girls' only to hear about them on your return.....barbie092@hotmail.com - save it quick!!!!

Submit Now!

If you are sending an article to Crossroads Via E-mail please use the following guidelines.

1. Send your text as a separate transmission. Do not send text and pictures together in the same transmission.
2. Send each picture as a separate JPG. transmission.
3. Format your picture as a 5" x 7" and scan at 75 to 150 max. dpi resolution.
4. If you design some special artwork to go with your article, send it as a separate item.

Submission deadline, Winter Issue of Crossroads is:
March 15th, 2001
Issue 2, Volume 3, "Winter"

Illusions Saskatchewan

Hi! We are the members of Illusions Saskatchewan, a group of girls from various communities within the province, ranging from larger urban centres to mid-size and smaller towns.

Our group currently numbers about twenty-five and presently represents a broad spectrum of the trans-gendered community. We meet (and, of course, party) fairly regularly at safe locations and, when possible, try to attend TG related functions put on by others together. We have friends and ties to the gay community here and have found them to be very accepting and friendly toward our group and life-style, which has led to our participation in some of their social events as well.

Our meetings are informal, as are our social outings (parties) and we welcome everyone, from the novice to the most seasoned of the TG community. Our main goal is to provide a safe, supportive environment for all trans-gendered people where they can feel comfortable and free to be themselves. We can help with advice on clothes, make-up, hair, etc., as well as the whole range of problems that are common to the trans-gendered.

If you would like to get in touch with us by telephone, call:
1-306-761-0414 and ask for Shirley
OR **1-306-352-0256** and ask for Peter.

If you prefer E-mail contact write to:

Shirley at **saa@sk.sympatico.ca**
or Rachel at **racheltg_passion@yahoo.ca**
or Britany at **cory.palmer@sk.sympatico.ca**

COMINGS AND GOINGS – THE REGINA GIRLS

By: Shirley Armitage

Its been a while since we last reported. Countless pairs of pantyhose have been pulled on, snagged, pulled off, and chucked, and now we have snow up to you-know-where so let's get started.

On July 22 the group gathered at Shirley's. It was a sweltering night, the poor thing doesn't have air-conditioning, so the girls spent much of the evening on the back step, much to the edification of the neighbors (who are all TG friendly but mighty curious). Annette, Bev, Brenda, Chantal, Nikki, and Rachel were the sweat hogs from Regina and Darla and Ursula came into town to drip with us.

It was back to Chez Cheri on August 19. She doesn't have air-conditioning either but it was a much cooler night. A good time was had by all. Bobbi, Julie, and Ursula joined us from out of town and brought along Sheryl, who has been active on the Saskatoon scene, but was new to us. Welcome sister. The local group included Annette, Britany, Cheri, Deidra, Nikki, Rachel and Shirley and we also had some new faces to introduce. Kandy, who some of us had already met at the Outside, came out to her first group function, and Mellissa (formerly Trish), who had been proceeding on her own for some time, rejoined us for this occasion. Again, welcome, welcome!

Its bitter-sweet to report that our beloved Bev has left our scene. She's now living and working in Calgary. Bitter, because she's lost to us. Sweet, because she's very happy and getting on with her life. Be warned, Calgary – we've sent you one of our best and we expect to have her treated right!

On September 2, Deidra, Cheri, Mellissa and Nikki got together at the Outside for an evening of fun and frolic. By all accounts it was a pleasant time.

Annette, Deidra, and Shirley visited Mellissa just prior to her leaving for Toronto for a confab with the folks at the Clark Institute. She has since reported that she felt the meetings went well.

On September 21, Kandy, Louella, and Rachel performed at the Intowner Show at the Outside during the week of the Imperial Court Coronation. The girls were presented with a certificate of appreciation from the Court but, to our great embarrassment, not one of the group showed up to cheer them on. Pull up your panty hose girls!

The Coronation for the Imperial Court of Regina and all Saskatchewan took place on September 23. The group was represented at this gala event by Britany, Cheri, Deidra, Kandy, Louella, and Nikki from Regina and Bobbi and Ursula from the north. To the great pleasure of the group, our old buddy Andrea joined them from points west. It was great to see her again, large as life and still gorgeous.

On the Thanksgiving weekend Rachel journeyed to Calgary to visit Bev and came back to report that all the glowing accounts of Bev's progress were true in spades.

On October 14, the group gathered at Cheri's to inspect the place and hear Cheri's account of her temporary re-location to one of our better hotels while her pad was used for a movie set. Chantal, Deidra, Mellissa, Rachel, and Shirley were the locals and we were joined by Andrea, Bobbi, Julie, and Ursula from out of town.

Our girl Alice dropped in for a short visit in mid-October. She's still not feeling a hundred percent but she fully intends to get back on the scene as soon as possible.

On November 11, at the Investiture Ceremony of the Imperial Court of Regina and all Saskatchewan, all of our group that was in attendance were given honorary titles as Ladies of the Court **...continued on page 11**

"Real World?"

By: Nikki Pryce

Well, here we go again. So many issues. So little time and me with such a teeny little attention span. Where should I start? Firstly, I really hope that the photo submitted with this article turns out to be the one used. Because I'm aghast at the last one! It was taken at the precise moment of the peak, of one of the worst times of my Transgendered little life. I mention this for two reasons. One; that years of persistent and selective photography go into creating the impression that one is kind of cute. Two, that life very often, like that God awful picture can get rather ugly at times and that sometimes things can go very wrong, and in a very big way in a hurry.

Like the morning I awoke in mid-August to discover a large, hard, and rather unannounced lump in my right breast. If that just gave you a sick feeling in the pit of your stomach, you're not alone.

I suppose I should have felt honored, because for some one who is not a real woman, what I was about to go through would qualify me to join a very special fraternity reserved for them exclusively. I was about to share with them a very female event. As a developing TS, to face the fear of possibly losing all that you have worked for and risked your health for is a little more than unsettling. After all what is a woman without her breasts? Her main advertising feature of available, fertile femininity. Besides, I haven't had these that long, so to quote a friend "Shouldn't they still be on warranty?"

Actually I came apart like an off brand track shoe. For the first two weeks I didn't even want to admit to myself that something might be wrong. If I ignored it maybe it would go away. It didn't, when I finally got the nerve to go to a clinic and be examined properly all my worst fears were confirmed. Then it was time to share another common experience with my female friends. The unbelievably snail like pace the process took on as I entered the health care system.

Since I'm not running for office I'll spare you the rant on the state of the health care system in this country. But give me a freakin' break! It took three weeks from the exam date just to get in for the mammogram. Meanwhile, try living a business as usual life without obsessing about the hard boiled egg in your chest. Wondering what horrid things it was up to in there and did it have friends? Not knowing is the worst. So, by the time I got into mammography I was pretty keyed up. They did a simple ultrasound. Which if you've never experienced is a rare treat not to be missed. They can take something personal, a vice, and turn it into something special! On top of everything else it was embarrassing. But I must say that if your a little short on cleavage when you go in you won't be when they get done with you.

The radiologist deciding he did not like what he saw ordered a biopsy. A word about biopsies, avoid them! They hurt! Leaves a nasty mark too. The wait for that was another three and a half weeks. Test done. Then another ten days for those results. Finally I get the word, it's non cancerous. What a relief! Then the debate as to remove it or not. They decide to leave if be for now. Monitor me closely and hope that it gets smaller.

So why did I tell you this long and uninteresting story, that didn't happen to you, and so why should you care? Because it could very well happen to you. If your a TS who has been on hormones for any length of time or a slightly less dysphoric type who has been playing fast and loose with their health on the side. Then you open yourself up to all sorts of interesting estrogen related foibles. Personally I would have thought my liver would have exploded before something like this happened. After all it is taking "steroids for girls". After a number of years it builds up to a mighty high level in your system. Couple that with diminishing returns on the risk invested. And maybe it's worth exploring other possible options for further enhancement. Something I've been forced to do, now that I'm looking at big reductions in the levels of different things I've been taking. Though very expensive, perhaps surgical solutions should be considered. Besides if you want to be a woman so bad you can taste it, does it make any sense to shorten the span of time you will be around to do it in?

Estrogens can only do so much to a male body anyway, unless you start when you just hit puberty, which for us old timers was out of the question. I used to see those lovely young things trotted out on US talk shows and wonder how in the world that was possible. No amount of hormones could possibly do that. Even if you were young and gifted to start with.

What I didn't realize at the time was that the US system is a somewhat more enlightened one. That the options I may have to consider in the near future are common place there. It seems that my Canadian sisters are a group apart after all. Sure those incredible looking girls take hormones. But not nearly as much as is common here. Sure the Americans might not know how to count ballots very well. But their cosmetic surgery industry is first rate! Since we only have one body to work with and since so many of us insist on altering it these days. Why don't we consider carefully the risks and benefits of what we are doing. Rather than popping powerful chemicals into ourselves just for the sake of what amounts to a status symbol in most of our groups.

Stay safe and sane.....Nikki

Comings & Goings, Continued from page 10 ... in appreciation for our support in the past. The new Ladies are Andrea, Britany, Chantal, Cheri, Deidra, Julie, Kandy, Louella, Nikki, Rachel, and Suzanne. Britany, Kandy, Louella, and Rachel performed on stage, to the approval of all.

On November 25, the gang again gathered at Chez Cheri. Annette, Brenda, Carol, Chantal, Cheri, Rachel, and Shirley made up the local contingent with Andrea and Bobbi representing the hinterland. The evening finished with Andrea, Bobbi, Cheri, and Rachel taking Annette firmly in hand and escorting her to sample the delights of the Outside for the first time.

That's it from Regina for now. It'll be interesting to see if our editor can shoehorn this on to one page! Until next time, if you're coming to Regina, leave your strappy little sandals at home unless you enjoy hypothermia.

Shirley Armitage

Got The News?

Crossroads has a domain/website

While still *under construction* in many ways,
we feel that it is complete enough to ask you to visit.
The site is intended to advertise Crossroads Magazine,
but it is also designed to be helpful and informative!
Your comments, positive/negative are invited.
Did it load up well on your screen, can it be improved?
Visit Crossroads and Che' Michelle my homepage at:

www.crossroads-magazine.com

Push The Envelope.... (if you have one!)

By: Rachel Juana Cruz

I just had to throw my bandeau into the ring, after reading Michelle's editorial in the Summer 2000 issue of *Crossroads*. Hmm... advocacy succumbs to complacency in the transgender community?! If that's reality for the Calgary girls, then I say "hey, what a luxury to have that problem!"

I'm a relative newcomer to the TG community in Regina. My experience, having been active in this community for nearly a year, is that complacency is not a problem here. I'd like to be able to pat my sisters, and myself, on the back and boast about how smart we've all been in not becoming complacent, but that really isn't how it played out. Complacency happens when people lull themselves in to a comfortable groove. And, the Illusions social group in Saskatchewan just hasn't found a comfortable groove to lull themselves into, yet. Challenging the TG community to get up off their keisters and start pushing the envelope is fine, when you have an envelope to push. In our little corner of the Canadian outlands we're still looking for the envelope. Once we find it, and figure out a way to fit in it, then maybe we'll share our Calgary sisters' quandary.

On the other hand, and to be perfectly honest, advocacy is a rare commodity here, too. There are notable exceptions, however. For our transsexual members who are undergoing the transition process, advocacy goes hand in hand with fighting those daily battles of attrition that follow them like shadows. I see the transsexuals as the natural trailblazers for the TG community. They are the ones who, in pursuing gender reassignment, by default, create more social space for the rest of us recreational shapeshifters. They have taken out mortgages on *Isle de Femme*, burned the bridge to the masculine mainland, and deal with all of the day-to-day adversities that go with their newly acquired property rights.

For instance, one TS girl, whom I know, has had to patiently wade through the ignorance and apprehension of classmates in her community college course. Eventually, she has gained the respect, trust, and understanding of almost all of her colleagues. Another TS girl recently struck out for the TG cause at a large downtown department store by confronting a sales clerk who was making jokes about her – the insult to the injury is that this TS girl is a faithful customer at this store. She bluntly pointed out to the clerk that her behaviour was unprofessional, and that she shouldn't bite the hand that feeds her. Subsequently, that same girl met with the general manager of the department store, and explained to him that transgendered clients shop regularly at the store, and that they don't deserve to be made objects of ridicule.

So much for the Victoria Cross (no, she's not a member of our group) nominees! I'm a transvestite! Think I'm wading into the struggle to help all of us trannies push into, and gain acceptance in, the public arena? Guess again! No way! Know why?! Because, like most transvestites, I'm not taking out a mortgage on *Isle de Femme*, and burning the bridge behind me. I'm only visiting. And, I need a retreat route to the masculine mainland. I love walking on the wild side, but if things get scary I run for cover, because I fear being discovered. For me, the secrecy is almost as magnificent an obsession as the shapeshifting that necessitates it.

But, more to the point, I think that before our TG community can start fighting to get the world more comfortable with trannies, we have to get more comfortable with ourselves. And, in Saskatchewan I believe that part of the process is for our trannies to start being more present and active in what Michelle Hart describes as the "safe and sanctioned places".

So, as much as I can, I will continue to drag (no pun intended) my sisters out to evenings of dancing and socializing at the Gay and Lesbian Community of Regina's (GLCR) nightclub, "The Outside". I will continue to perform in drag shows put on by Regina's Imperial Sovereign Court, and I'll make sure that my sisters all know when I'm performing. I will encourage my sisters to try performing themselves, if they show an interest, and make damn sure that I'm there for them when they perform.

Sorry, but I just don't buy the parochial attitude that transgendered people can't find common ground with drag queens. Often, I hear statements like "they don't crossdress for the same reasons that trannies do"; or "drag queens are gay, and most of us trannies are straight". Who cares! I have found that most of the drag queens in Saskatchewan that I've come to know are really wonderful, friendly, and talented people. So what, if more of them view themselves as performance artists than as automorphed girls! As a group, the drag queens appear more comfortable in their feminine personae and comportment, are better dressed, and have a broader knowledge of hairstyling, and the uses of cosmetics and accessories, than do the trannies here. That's not meant to be a put down. My point is that trannies in Saskatchewan can learn lots from the drag queens, and we shouldn't estrange ourselves from them.

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ISCCA & SA

"The Imperial Sovereign Court of the Chinook Arch"

Dear Fellow Illusions Members,

By the time you read this article, The Imperial Sovereign Court of the Chinook Arch will be well into the advanced stages of preparation for the Annual Charity Ball. This is the event where we celebrate the end of the Reign of the current Reigning Emperor and Empress along with their Imperial House. It is also where we give out all the money that we have raised to various charities throughout the city of Calgary.

This year, the Ball will take place on Saturday April 21st at the Quality Hotel and Conference Centre on Macleod Trail (formerly known as the Stampeder Inn). Ticket prices for the evenings events are as follows:

February 1st - March 1st - $25.00
March 2nd - April 20th - $30.00
and $35 dollars if you pay at the door.

Tickets will be available from the Midnight Cafe & Bar, Rooks Bar & Beanery and Metro Boyztown. If you have never attended one of our Charity Balls, please come down and join us for a fabulous evening of entertainment. This year, as with last year, we are expecting guests from all across Canada and the US with some of the most amazing performers ever seen.

The Ball Doors open at 5:00 pm and will start at 6:00pm sharp. It usually ends just after midnight, but there has been the odd occasion where it has kept going until 2:00 am in the morning. It is also a way of saying goodbye to the old and welcoming in the newly crowned Emperor and Empress. Last year we had an amazing turn out from the Illusions group,who also performed an amazing number (The Spice girls as I recall) and did a fantastic job doing it. Thank you to all who came to the event!!! We, the Imperial 24th House of Tequila pigs, Buca Boys and Party Animals still have a variety of fund raising shows left before our time is up and once again, the ISCCA is looking at giving out over $10,000 in donations.

I am sure that I will continue to write and keep you informed for the New Emperor and Empress, but I would like to take this opportunity to say, on behalf of all of us, - THANK YOU!!! The illusions Group has played a very big part in our Reign this year. From joint functions to just seeing your smiling faces at our shows has made the year very memorable and without the kind donations and support that you have all shown, it would not have been enjoyable as it was. So give yourselves all a big pat on the back. You have helped to make this Empress a very happy one!!!

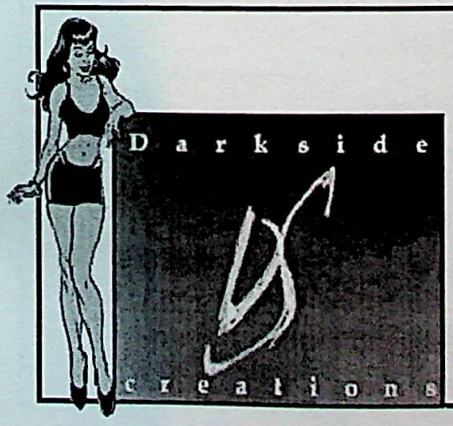
Well Take care for now and hope to see you all at the Ball and of course, I'm sure we'll see the same friendly faces at The Midnight Cafe on Saturday Nights. God Bless you ALL!

H.M.I.S.M.
Empress 24 of Calgary
Rhoda Stiffy

ISCCA & SA Events Calendar

Jan 19th - Rooks 10:00pm
Jan 21st - Boyztown - 12:00am
Jan 27th - Midnight Cafe - 10:30pm
Feb 9th - Rooks - 10:00pm
Feb 10th - Midnight Cafe (Roxy & Hell-on-Heels B'Day) 10:30pm
Feb 18th - Boyztown - 12:00am
Feb 24th - Midnight Cafe - 10:00pm
Mar 10th - Midnight Cafe - 10:30pm
Mar 23rd - Rooks (Campaign begins) - 10:00pm
Mar 24th - Midnight Cafe(Campaign Show) - 10:30pm
Mar 25th - Boyztown(Campaign Show) - 12:00am
Mar 31st - Midnight Cafe(campaign Show) - 10:30pm
Apr 7th - Midnight Cafe(Campaign Show) - 10:30pm
Apr 14th -Midnight Cafe (VOTING) - 10:30pm =- voting is from noon until midnight.
Apr 18th - Court Show at the Midnight starts at 7:00pm
Apr 19th - In-Town Show - Midnight Cafe - 9:00pm
Apr 20th - Out-of-town Show at the Quality hotel & Conference centre - starts at 9:00pm $7.00 cover Charge at door
Apr 21st - The 25th Annual Charity Ball - at the Quality Hotel & Conference centre - 6:00pm sharp!

information for our upcoming shows is also posted on our website :www.fortunecity.com/village/rockhudson/584/index.html. You can send your requests for information to rhodastiffy@iname..com or call 277-4775 and ask for David or Arlie(Rhoda).



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Kananaskis Re-visited

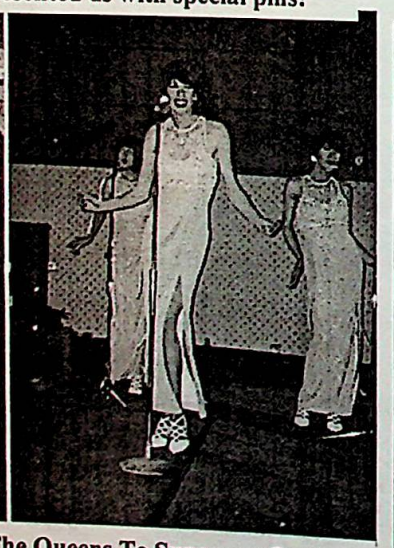
Commemorating the five year anniversary of *"Rendevous '95"*

During the late winter months of 1995, trans-gendered people from all over North America gathered in Kananaskis Country to celebrate their trans-ness at Rendezvous '95!

Rendezvous '95 was the National Convention of Tri-Ess, the American society for the second self. Phi Sigma Chapter, (later Serenity) Tri-Ess, under the leadership of Audrey Allen, Kim and Stephanie Walker applied for and received the nod from National Headquarters for Phi Sigma to arrange to host the convention. As the early arrangements were put in place, Jacquie Flannigan, the current President of Phi-Sigma became Co-ordinater General, Kim carried on as workshops and educational co-ordinater, Stephanie Walker took over as special events co-ordinater and yours truly, Michelle Hart became entertainment Co-ordinater. Many hours were spent making all the arrangements. Brenda & I arrived late on the evening of the first day with a five ton truck load of sound equipment, lighting and clothes to wear! The bell hop just about died on the spot. We arrived just in time for the last of the opening wine & cheese and then retired to the bar, where we found Sarah from Calgary, dressed to the nines reading a book on *advanced mathmatics.* We ordered her another beer and helped her close the book. Poor grrrl, she really did need some new directions!

Rendezvous '95 turned out to be a great experience. The venue was mainstream and we found ourselves celebrating our trans-ness with the local Teamsters Union, the Ski Patrol and the Fertilizer Retailers Association, all of whom were having annual conventions in the same Hotel. The Hotel staff were really great.

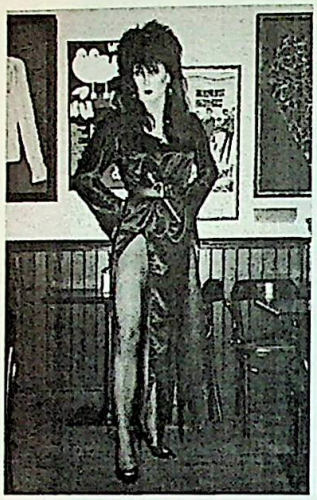
Michelle, Hotel guest Judy, Leslie & Judy's friend in the bar late on the second night. They had a million questions, later Judy presented us with special pins!



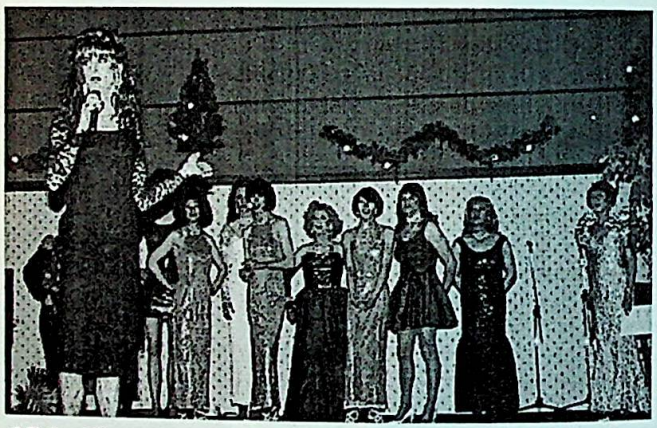
Kiwi & Brenda ... The Queens To Supremes On Stage

Despite initial reservations on the part of everyone, by the second night we were all friends and getting along like a house on fire. Hotel guests would come up to us in the bars and ask if they could talk to us. They were so curious, it was almost as if they had to actually touch us in order to make sure we were real.

The out reach to the mainstream community was amongst the best I have ever seen during my short life! The attending Americans could not get over the fact that such a small of people group could host such a great convention. Maybe someday we can do something like that again. Would be nice don't ya' think grrrls.



Teri, as Elvira and Vancouvers Jill Richards, singing in her real voice as Marilyn Munro. Excellent presentations.



Miche, Kiwi, Shamis, Bianca, Jill, Dace, Chris, Jacqui & Nat

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It's A Queer Thing: The Movement for Transgender Rights in Canada

©Peoples Voice Online; People's Voice Email, June 1998

By: Chris Frazer

In 1992, transgender activist Leslie Feinberg, an American Marxist, published *Transgender Liberation: A Movement Whose Time Has Come*, a call for gender-queers to fight the oppressive gender ideology of capitalism.

Feinberg's manifesto coincided with an upsurge in political organizing by trans-activists in the United States, who have pushed forward the struggle to win civil rights for trans-people in states like Minnesota and many municipalities across the USA. The movement is now coalescing in Canada, where two recent developments have focused greater public attention on the presence of transgendered persons and their issues.

In Toronto, more than 250 transgendered delegates arrived from across Canada, the USA, England, and Australia for the 12th Annual convention of the International Foundation for Gender Education (IFGE), March 23-29. The IFGE gathering addressed a range of topics -- from human rights, to HIV, trans-prisoners, gender theory, spirituality, marriage and relationships, and "how-to" make-up sessions -- that reflect the diversity of politics and issues that concern male-to-female and female-to-male transexuals, crossdressers, gender-queers, and many others who simply do not conform to "conventional" gender identity norms.

Meeting for the first time outside the USA, the convention illustrated the extent to which the transgendered community is becoming organized and visible, and that there are real possibilities for confronting stereotypes and discrimination.

Miqqi Alicia Gilbert, also known as Michael A. Gilbert, is a philosophy professor at York University. As a "committed crossdresser," Gilbert is a part of the new wave of trans-people who are no longer prepared to remain hidden and silent.

This trend is especially evident at universities and colleges where many academics are not only "coming out," but are also researching and teaching "transgender studies." And equally as impressive are the growing numbers of young people, both on and off campus, who "are confronting their transgenderism at an earlier age," said Gilbert.

Gilbert is a member of Xpressions, an Ontario-based support group which hosted the IFGE meeting. For many years, such groups provided a much- needed network of contacts for transgendered people, many of whom remain closeted in the absence of reliable protection against discrimination.

But things are starting to change. It may not have been surprising to see Toronto playwright Sky Gilbert mingling with delegates. But Miqqi Gilbert could not suppress a chuckle when telling the People's Voice that Ontario Tory Premier Mike Harris supported the Xpressions bid for the conference with a machine-signed form letter. "I'm not sure that he really knows what he signed," said a delighted Gilbert.

Far more significant was the speech of Ontario Human Rights Commissioner Keith Norton who told surprised delegates that transgendered persons are protected in Ontario under the province's sexual orientation provisions, but that the time had come to include specific reference to the transgendered in the provincial human rights act. "He began doing research and discovered that we are the least protected people," said Gilbert. At present, only Quebec offers explicit human rights protection for the transgendered.

Many queer and transgendered activists argue that protections based on sexual orientation are insufficient for checking discrimination against trans-people. Groups like the International Conference on Transgendered Law and Employment Policy (ICTLEP) point out that transgendered persons have the same range of sexual orientation as non-transgendered people.

The issue is also one of physical appearance and how this reflects gender identity, which is why many trans-activists believe that human rights protections must be extended to include provisions on gender identity as well as on sexual orientation.

This is the question facing activists in British Columbia who are struggling to prevent the NDP government from sweeping human rights protection for transgendered people under the carpet.

In January 1998, the B.C. Human Rights Commission urged the adoption of eleven amendments to the provincial Human Rights Code, including one that would "prohibit discrimination on the basis of gender identity."

The amendment would provide recourse for transgendered people who presently face a largely unchecked range of discrimination and hate crimes, said Victoria-based activist Gail Owen in an interview with the People's Voice.

"In this province, transgendered persons are attacked every day of the year. They are beaten up, fired from their jobs, denied medical attention, and discriminated against in the court system," said Owen, who is a male-to-female transgendered person. She is also a business agent for the Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC) and was formerly a provincial organizer for the NDP. Owen served on the Transgendered Advisory Committee for the B.C. Human Rights Commission, which heard from hundreds of witnesses, including male-to-female and female-to-male transexuals, crossdressers, and drag queens and kings, during the autumn of 1997.

However, B.C. Attorney General Ujjal Dosanjh wants to shelve the amendments. Owen believes that the NDP government is afraid of a backlash from the religious right-wing and the opposition Liberals.

Last year's recall campaign against three NDP legislators started when the religious right-wing took up the cudgel against elected officials who supported gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered rights.

The Liberals also oppose protection for transgendered persons. Liberal human rights critic Jeff Plant cynically hides his trans-phobia by arguing that the timing is wrong. That's the same kind of logic that racists used to defend segregation in the USA and apartheid in South Africa.

However, the fight is far from over, and trans-activist are not alone.

Among those supporting the amendments are the B.C. Federation of Labour, the Victoria and District Labour Council, the B.C. Teachers Federation, and, despite the legislative wing's equivocation, the provincial NDP. Transgender activists and their allies are stepping up pressure on the B.C. government. They are urging supporters to call the Attorney General at **250-387-1866.**

Many hope that the struggle will be strengthened by the recent Supreme Court decision (Vriend vs. Alberta), which ruled that sexual orientation is a prohibited ground for discrimination and must be included in Alberta's Individual Rights Protection Act.

But the decisive weapon in winning this struggle lies in unity and solidarity between the transgendered and queer communities, and the labour and democratic movements. In the final analysis, human rights protection for transgendered persons is a class question as well as one of democracy and human rights. As long as transgendered people are unprotected, the employing class and their right-wing representatives will continue to use a climate of fear and intolerance as a **....continued on page 31**

LAKOTA WINKTE

By: Kenneth Dollarhide, Ph.D

"MITAKUYEPI OYASIN CHANTE WASTE YANAPE CHI-YESAPI - *All my kinspeople with good heart I shake hands with you.*"

My topic is called "TWO SPIRIT TRADITION AMONG THE LAKOTA" but that is not what I intend to talk about today. I will explain why in the body of my talk.

My background I think is important in light of the topic. I am a mixed blood Oglala Lakota. I was born and raised on the Pine Ridge Reservation and lived in nearby border towns in South Dakota and Nebraska. My earliest memory of seeing a winkte was as a child. I was with my grandmother at a ceremony at Pine Ridge. Perhaps I was ten or twelve years old. A child walked by us wearing a brown dress and her hair was in tight curls. I think it was called a poodle perm, and I asked my grandmother why that "boy" was wearing a dress? She said in so many words "Hush, that is not a boy, she is a winkte. If you tease her she will bring you harm and might even make you into a winkte. So you must always treat her with respect and be kind to her." I didn't know exactly what my grandmother meant by a winkte but I knew even then that the winkte had something to do with magic and mystery and I wanted to find out about this power and how a boy became a girl and a winkte.

I began asking questions about the winkte, but everyone I would ask would tell me to "run along" or "don't be silly". Finally I asked my uncle Eddie, who, other than his military duty spent his entire life on the reservation, about the winkte and he told me the winkte is only a sissy. I was disappointed and told him what grandmother said and that he was wrong. He smiled and sent me away. That November when my birthday rolled around he gave me a gift. I was so happy and just knew it was the football I wanted. I tore open the box and it was a doll. My uncle Eddie said I wanted to know about sissies so I must want a doll. I was not to receive another present from him until just before he died many years later. Of course what I didn't understand at the time was that even a discussion of the winkte was just not done. Even today there are those that would rather not have this tradition known or talked about. This primarily because the early missionaries, the U.S. Government and Lay Christians did and often continue to demand the total destruction of other faiths and traditions, thus the historical and continuing attack upon native traditions all in the name of bringing G*d and civilization to the heathens who had/have an open and tolerant society, something perhaps the missionaries lacked.

Leslie Marmon Silko describes the old Pueblo world view in her book of [autobiographical] essays, *Yellow Woman and a Beauty of the Spirit*:

"Before the arrival of the missionaries, a man could dress as a woman and work with the women and even marry a man without any fanfare. Likewise a woman was free to dress as a man, to hunt and go to war with the men, and to marry a woman. In the old Pueblo world view we are all a mixture of male and female and this sexual identity is changing constantly. Sexual inhibition did not begin until the Christian missionaries arrived." (P. 67)

As I grew up I did not think of the winkte for a number of years. I was too busy with my life as a teenager and growing up. After serving in the army I started college on the GI Bill at the University of Nebraska and a friend of mine, also a veteran, called one night and said he and his girlfriend Belinda were going to come by and pick me up to go get a beer or coffee. They picked me up and as I climbed into the back seat I noticed a girl was sitting there and I said "Hi, my name is Ken."

My friend turned around and said to me, "That is Charlie and he is a queer." Charlie laughed and said very little. It turned out that we lived near each other and we gradually became friends. I was informed by my friend's girlfriend, Belinda, who was Charlie's mentor that Charles preferred to be called Charlene and was a transsexual. There after I always called her Charlene and used feminine pronouns in reference to her. She reawakened my earlier wonderings about winkte.

I began trying to learn more about the winkte and I returned to the stories, myths and legends of the Lakota people. Dreams and visions are central in Lakota society. Nothing takes place, be it hunting, war parties, even joining particular societies, without a dream or vision quest. This dream or vision may come in various forms, as an animal, as a spirit, as a person and even as an inanimate object. These dreams and visions often determine one's place and roll in society. There is, for example, the legend of the Double-Face Woman (Anukite). Those who dream of Anukite, who has both a male and female face become experts in the handiwork of women, quillwork, beading, tanning, dress making etc.... The males who dream of her, are required to choose between being male or female.

There are also those who dream of a wakan win, a sacred woman or a buffalo cow (pte winkte). These are required to forever become a woman, marrying a man, etc.... Walter Williams describes this "choosing ceremony" in a discussion of the Omaha Indians, another plains tribe. "When an Omaha boy sees the Moon Being on his vision quest, the spirit holds in one hand a man's bow and arrows, and in the other a woman's pack strap. 'When the youth tried to grasp the bow and arrows the moon being crossed his hands very quickly, and if the youth was not very careful he seized the pack strap....thereby fixing his lot in later life. In such cases he could not help acting the woman, speaking, dressing, and working just as Indian women used to do." (Williams, *The Spirit and the Flesh, p.29,* quoted from James O. Dorsey, "*A Study of Siouan Cults*", Bureau of American Ethology - Annual Report 11, 1889-90, p.378. It then becomes a spiritual and sacred duty and responsibility to fulfill this vision whether one desires to be a winkte or not.

There are times however, that the dreamer will/would resist this dream or vision until finally one is compelled to submit to it. If one resists something terrible will happen to the family, clan or even the tribe. Sometimes one will submit only after a disaster forced one to accept his/her true nature. Lame Deer, a Lakota Holy Man said, "If nature [Wakan Tanka] puts a burden on a person by making the person different [Wakan Tanka] gives that person a special spiritual power." (*Lame Deer, Seeker of Visions, p.127*). The winkte tradition, among others, makes possible an inclusive Lakota society. No one, regardless of an individual difference, is excluded from participating fully in the greater society. Indeed, among the Lakota, uniqueness and individual differences are seen as gifts and blessings from the creator placing the individual who possesses these gifts in a central ritual role within the tribe. There are four classes of "holy" or "sacred wakan" people, (1. Wapiyapi - curers, 2. Wakan kaga - performers, 3. Wicahmunga - wizards, and 4. Winkte. See William Powers, *Sacred Language*, p. 181 ff.) all of whom have been given, by Wakan Tanka, unique gifts. Among the Lakota, uniqueness is a blessing. This is why the Lakota can say, "Unlike white people, we Indian people throw no one away." It is interesting that in several biographies many TG/TS women speak of their rejection of their true nature and it is only after some crisis, either emotional or physical or both, that they finally accept their true or authentic nature. After accepting herself as TS/TG the author of these biographies will often report how surprised she is at the number of people that accept her. But this is possible only after she is willing to accept herself, as herself. This is exactly what the Lakota mean when it is said that one must accept one's nature. What does Winkte mean? Win, means "woman"; kte, is an enclitic future tense,

"will be..." Winkte means 'will be woman'. It is known by the Lakota that the winkte are given certain kinds of powers by the creator, Taku Wakan or Wankan Tanka. The Winkte is a Wakan person, a sacred person. She often has healing powers and knowledge of medicine. She is the one who gives boys' secret sacred names, she is often called upon to participate in girl's ceremonies. She is known for her compassion and wisdom, and often young men and women go to her for advice and guidance in matters relating to the heart and love. She is also known for her profound love of children and often is given children to raise. In addition, Winkte were also known to be excellent small game hunters but they did not go on buffalo hunts. They would however often go on war parties and were known to be very brave warriors. There is indeed a reference to a Crow Winkte who fought with Custer against the Lakota at the Little Big Horn.

"Yes a Crow woman fought with Three-stars on the Rosebud, two of them did for that matter; but one of them was neither a man nor a woman. She looked like a man yet she wore a woman's clothing; and she had the heart of a woman. Besides, she did a woman's work. Her name was Finds-them-and kills them. She was not a man, and yet not a woman," Pretty-shield repeated. "She was not as strong as a man, and yet she was wiser than a woman,... Two women, one of them not quite a woman, fought with Three-stars, and I hope that you will put it in a book, Sign-talker, because it is the truth." (Frank Linderman, *Pretty-shield, Medicine Woman of the Crows,* p.228-231) Those that think the winkte are "sissies" are wrong.

As the above demonstrates, among the Lakota, indeed among many tribes, one very important element in defining whether one is male or female is the **functional** role one has in the group. For example, a winkte may, at times, transcend the female role, that is, a winkte may participate in a war party but she will always return to her functional role as a woman, i.e. beading, cooking, tanning, dress making, picking berries etc....

Her humor is well known and understood, as is her anger if she is abused too much. If one should anger a Winkte she may reveal the sacred, secret name, or she may give one a very public vulgar name. Let me give you just a couple of examples of her anger and power within the tribe. One comes from an account in 1780 that explains that "Slukela haka iwoto." Slukela bumped into haka." Haka is a stick game and the person called Slukela gambled and lost all of his horses, weapons and all of his clothing playing haka. The name Slukela that has come down to us, and the only name that has come down to us by which this person is known, is a name given by a winkte, it means "Skinned-penis". There is an 1872 account of someone called Anog onze who killed a couple of Crow Indians. This means "Anus at Both ends". This name, I suspect adequately describes what a winkte thought of this particular man! Such is the power of the winkte. (Walker, *Lakota Society, p.127,14*)

The winkte is accepted because she is part of Creation, she may be unique, she may be different but that uniqueness is what makes her sacred and honored by the tribe. To quote again from Leslie Marmon Silko, "Persons born with exceptional physical or sexual differences were highly respected and honored because their physical differences gave them special positions as mediators between this world and the spiritual world." (p.67)

What I would like to focus the remainder of my time on is the notion of sexuality and gender. There are a number of books, including Walter Williams, *The Spirit of the Flesh,* Roscoe, *The Zuni Man-Woman, Changing Ones,* Lang, *Men as Women Women as Men,* Jacob, Thomas, Lay, eds, *Two Spirit People,* etc... all of which address this question but in some minor details I disagree with them. It seems to me that while those who speak of the "Two Spirit" tradition and present this tradition as genuinely more complex and interesting than traditional binary stuff are still not adequately describing the winkte tradition because the Two Spirit notion still relies on the sex organ relationship. Too often even these scholars seem to still be focused on what is between people's legs and fail to understand that there is more going on when it comes to the winkte.

There are, among many Native Peoples a notion of two sexes and four or more genders:

1. *Male sex organs - Male gender*
2. *Female sex organs - Female gender*
3. *Male sex organs - Female gender*
4. *Female sex organs - Male gender*

This is an interesting concept and it goes very much against the traditional monotheistic two sex/two gender model; what can be called the binary notion of sex and gender that dominates western society. It is this notion that lead to the Two-Spirit concept that became popular in about 1990. I mentioned that I did not want to focus on this Two-Spirit tradition. Now I will explain. I may be wrong but it seems to me that much of the so called Two-Spirit tradition focuses upon same sex/same gender relationships. While I am not making any kind of value statement, I will argue that the winkte tradition has little to do with same sex/same gender relationships; that in fact they were/are not same sex relationships.

Did traditional wintke take a husband or male lover? The answer is usually, yes. Was this a same sex relationship? I believe the answer is NO! The reason this is not a traditional same sex relationship is because the winkte is a gender woman and NOT A MALE. According to Lakota tradition it is quite natural that a man would desire a woman, and that a woman would desire a man. A winkte is a woman, she would of course, desire a male partner. What is really important to note here is to remember the focus IS NOT UPON SEX BUT UPON GENDER. THE GENDER ONE IS, IS MUCH MORE IMPORTANT THAN THE SEXUAL ORGANS ONE POSSESSES. It is a same sex relationship only and only if one buys into the binary, monotheistic model of sex and gender. If one understands the two sex, four gender paradigm, then one must understand that gender, that is, what one KNOWS ONESELF TO BE, is much more important than the sexual organs one happens to possess. That is not to say that sexual organs are unimportant, clearly in most cases they are important. However, [by winkte tradition] sex organs alone can not and do not make one a female or male.

The sacredness of the winkte, that which makes her wakasa, sacred, has nothing to do with her sex organs, but everything to do with her gender. She is wakasa because she has the unique ability to see the totality of the world, not just from a male perspective, nor only a female, but both. She is both male and female, and neither male nor female. She lives in a world that understands both and denies neither; she lives in that unique sacred space where only she can be.... - that space where all of us existed before the beginning of gender and sexual differences.

When the winkte observes the world, when she confronts the world and all that appears in the world, she does not desire "to know" the world, or even to transform the secrets imbedded in Creation; on the contrary she is engulfed in the very mystery of existence and desires to emphasize those very mysteries as mysteries. There is in the winkte a unique and dynamic relationship that exists between her, the SUBJECT-KNOWER, and the universe, the OBJECT-KNOWN that can be expressed only by accepting, without question, that very mystery that envelops the object, the world.

Sacred space does not mean that she should walk around with head bowed and hands folded. Nor does it mean that she is a goddess or priestess of some sort. Nor does it mean that she can perform some sort of miracle. Her sacredness lies in her every day ordinariness. The winkte are not seen as a threat to her society but rather are seen in the words of Marjorie Anne Napewastewin Schutzer, "...an affirmation of humanity's original pre-gendered unity ,,,,representative of a **.....continued on page 25**

Life is but a dream

By: Rhiannon

In the last issue of Crossroads, our Michelle made a comment with regards to the trend (noted by more than just herself), that upon entering mainstream society during the real life test - many transsexuals opt to "drop out" from the T-scene, and as a result their story is "yet untold". Well... in response, I thought I might try to fill in some of the spaces (at least as far as my own experience is concerned) and shed some light on what the undertaking has been like from my own perspective.

As you have all surely heard by now, the cost of setting foot on a pathway which is more suited to one's inner self, is enormous. REALLY - IT IS!!! There are the initial aspects which one considers - such as one's marriage (if applicable), job, home, and family life. All of these are guaranteed to bear the wounds inflicted by the social stigma attached to a change in one's gender. For some, the various aspects of the wounds are fatal, and were in my case. These costs alone are staggering enough, and when coupled with the specter of prolonged pain and suffering being endured by loved ones, the resulting sum can be enough to dissuade a great number of transgendered individuals from pursuing what they feel will make them truly happy. It was only after incredibly long preparation, that myself and those close to me were ready to deal with the inevitable fallout that my decision would incur on not only my life, but the lives of those I loved the most.

For me I always knew that once started down the pathway to gender reassignment, there would be no turning back. The years of preparation that I undertook afforded me that certainty. Now, as I live my life each day, I find that there are sides to the experience (both good and bad), that even the most careful planning cannot take into account. The plusses are obvious. You achieve social gender affirmation through the places you go, and the people you meet. No longer kept under lock and key, my inner spirit and sense of self has awakened from it's long sleep and has floated to the surface, where it's enjoying the sun's warmth. The quiet homecoming that I experience every time my gender is acknowledged by someone new - be it at work, buying groceries, putting gas in my car, or riding an elevator - is staggering. I'm alive again, for the first time since I can remember, and it feels so good, because finally, finally, finally - life fits. People are accepting me for what's in my heart, and the freedom is enormous. I still roll my eyes each time it happens, and ask myself " how can it be that something so powerful can be taken for granted by nearly everyone?!?".

Then there are the more challenging aspects. Things like long-range life planning, close interpersonal dealings with the (now) opposite sex, and with people of the (now) same sex! The manner in which we do this is decidedly different from the way we did in our old gender roles. The fact that it didn't suit us before is not the issue. It's that – albeit reluctantly, we *did* play out those roles. In learning to emulate what could be considered 'acceptable' male behaviour, it is difficult if not impossible to come away without at least a small clue as to why men do the things that they do – be they good, bad, or otherwise. It doesn't make you an expert, but it does give you a window of empathy that would not be provided in the experiences of most genetic women.

The automated responses that we adopted over the years to remain hidden as transgendered people, don't dissolve with a change of identification. How much of our previously entrenched gender behaviour is acceptable? Where do you draw the line? It would be foolish to assume that the techniques one has learned in the past to ensure our own social survival will be vaporized by the simple act of changing our outward appearance. It's because of reactions when dealing with those who aren't "in the know". When you inevitably do become closer to people in your daily life, you may find that it's very difficult to let your guard down. The big difference now is that I am trying to weed out what is left of my previously learned male behaviour.

At the outset I did realize that these issues would come up, but admittedly I wasn't prepared for the frequency with which they do. Is it proper - or even fair, to deny ourselves a wealth of past experiences in order to seemingly fit the expectations of those we share our personal space with? I would hope not, but dealing with it is no small task if one has aspirations of slipping seamlessly into the binary world of mainstream gender concepts. I by no means advocate hyper-masculinity or hyper-femininity. In my (humble) opinion, the most well rounded individuals I have met possess a shared mixture of both gender aspects. Of course some of the most well rounded people I've met also happen to be transgendered! Things that make you go.... "Hmmmmm". But I digress...

The single most unexpected revelation that I've come upon since making the transition to full-time, was that dropping into a "normal existence" is no more than a pipe dream. Not because I can't fit into the mold that I perceived was waiting for me. It's because the mold isn't there! Once we've veered from the gender pathway that we were taught was the *only* road to walk, the road is gone and there is no way back. Being aware of one another, and where we are all coming from in the gender spectrum, appears to be an ability that is reserved for the few who are awake to the concept. How to explain..... If anybody reading this has watched the movie "the Matrix", then they will remember that the story depicts a society of people living in a comatose state, and experiencing an existence that was simply an induced dream. Yes, it's a pretty melodramatic analogy, but that's the best way in which I can relate my personal feelings at present.

When a co-worker jokes with me and says he doesn't understand what makes "you women tick", I have to laugh inside, because I strongly suspect that he *would* understand if he had too. I am equally as duped when women roll their eyes and simply say "Men!" When you find congruency in a gender that is not the one you were assigned at birth, and were forced to live in one that didn't belong to your heart, you are bound to develop a subtle feel for both sides of the gender fence. Being a woman in society is what I want and it feels right for me - but I am now, and forever will be at a loss to be able to identify with the experience of those who have lived their life from a singular gender viewpoint. My viewpoint was forged through years of struggle and turmoil and while I walked away from it somewhat resentful, I now see that there may have been a small reward. I feel that I am now much better informed as a result.

That being said, to awaken from a dream that everyone else is still having, and to remain an active participant is still a sometimes jarring experience. It's like watching people with blinders on, as they aren't aware of the impulses that guide the opposite sex through the dance that everyone shares in their daily lives. I admit that a lot of readers might disagree with that point of view, but it's an observation made from a seldom-traveled vantage point. The real question is whether it's a blessing to be awake and have a clearer picture of the gender-play at work in society, or if it is better to remain asleep and enjoy the protection and comfort afforded by the order and uniformity of a singularly-gendered existence. I still don't know if the view being provided to me through the window of my own transsexualism is a blessing or a curse. Perhaps I'll never know. Each life is unique and for myself, I am just beginning to really enjoy mine. I guess it's because I'm finally completely conscious. We've all heard the phrase "life is but a dream", but it's important to remember that dreams are the whisperings of the subconscious, and as any mystic will tell you - all dreams contain a lesson that is to be applied in our daily lives. But only when we are truly awake...**Rhiannon**

Brenda's Bulletin Board

By: Brenda Hart

Hello again, time seems to fly by between columns. I am always hopeful that for the next issue I will be more organized and possibly have prepared an outline with a theme! Guess what? So far this has not happened.

In any case—here it goes. 'M' recently went away to a very masculine course for 9 days to Saskatoon. No sooner had 'M' left when two of our closest friends who live down by Lethbridge called to invite us to attend a dinner party. Unfortunately I had to turn down the invitation. We did visit on the phone for a little while though, and I told her that we finally took delivery of our new PT Cruiser. So we discussed the PT Cruiser but not at length because what she really wanted to know was, " Did 'M' take Michelle along with him to Saskatoon?" Of course I had to say yes because this was the case. Our friends know about Michelle because Michelle accidentally met them at the hotel where the Gay Ball was in held downtown Calgary in 1997.

Needless to say we have discussed transgendered issues with both of them. Now had they not found out by accident we probably would never have told them and we never would have known how supportive they really were as friends.

We have many TG friends who are terrified of telling their immediate families and best friends of their transgenderism. If only they would give their families and friends a chance, because they just might be pleasantly surprised by the outcome.

I know that in our case our families accept 'M's' transgenderism, now maybe some of them don't like it but they do tolerant it. I some times think that transgendered people worry too much about the idea of transgenderism and what it means.

Transgenderism is different in all cases because no two human beings are exactly alike. Wouldn't it be great if we all liked ourselves and were happy with our lives. I think that sometimes mankind (womankind) tends to over think situations. Why can't we just accept the fact that some individuals are different. Some people like express that difference by dressing up in clothes of the opposite sex. Why not leave it at that.

But, no it has to be thought about, discussed and discussed some more, rationalized and so on. No wonder some transgendered people have emotional problems.

Maybe just maybe some day soon it really won't matter what any one looks like or what clothes they wear. Paradise! Keep dreaming. **Love Brenda.**

Congratulations!

A big thank you **to everyone who has helped get the new Illusions Calgary rooms ready for service. Your efforts are obvious and will be appreciated by everyone! Governing Council, Illusions Calgary**

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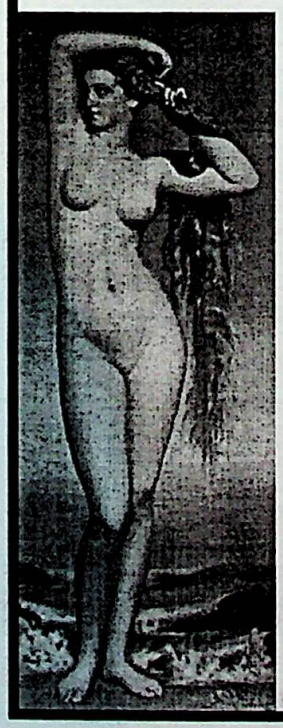

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Virtual Freedom

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"What a boon the Internet has been for trans people! Pity it can't do it all!"

By: Alison Terry

Has any group of people benefited more from the Internet than trans people? Perhaps, but not many.

The Internet represents a kind of freedom for many people with diverse interests, some of them not so wholesome. As the Internet developed, however, trans people were in a unique position. It wasn't against the law to be trans and yet we had been so oppressed that for centuries we'd been largely invisible.

This secrecy had the expected and desired effect of making trans people feel guilty and ashamed. These are useful emotions to your enemies. Guilt and shame will keep you in a state of self imprisonment. If you managed to overcome these obstacles and decided to seek out other trans people, the problem then became where to find them.

It's true, of course, that trans groups existed before the Internet, but they weren't easy to locate. Newspapers in some cities even refused to accept advertisements from them. How do you attract members when you've been shut out from the main avenues of information?

In 1977, when I tried to meet other trans people who lived in my home town, I had to join a California based organization to do it. I still remember Tri-Ess sending me with my membership package a card with their address on it that I could slip into the local library's subject card catalogue under "Transvestism". It was a very clever way to reach out to potential new members, but it was surreptitious and painstaking. I checked the catalogue a month or so after I had put the card in it, but the card disappeared. I always wondered if some lonely tv had plucked it out, or whether it was some diligent library worker intent on cleansing the card catalogue.

Information is a powerful weapon. We did the best with what society gave us, but it wasn't very much. Generally speaking, society controlled the message. Ergo, there were a lot of very isolated, very lonely trans people.

Nowadays, it's still possible to be lonely, but impossible to feel isolated. You can amuse yourself for days skipping from trans site to trans site. Like anything on the Internet, these sites vary in quality, but that's hardly the point. It's the number and variety that is so staggering. And while you'll still be hard pressed to reduce our numbers to a one in something statistic, the community has become connected like never before into a sizable and potentially powerful voice for change.

But while the Internet has been a great benefit to the trans community, it still has one significant drawback. It's only virtual reality. That means, for example. That you can have your own web site, but still not be out to your next door neighbour or your family. Millions of people can know about you. except for the ones that matter most. Some trans groups even exist only on the Internet. We are everywhere on the net, but nowhere on the street. We're out and proud, but not really.

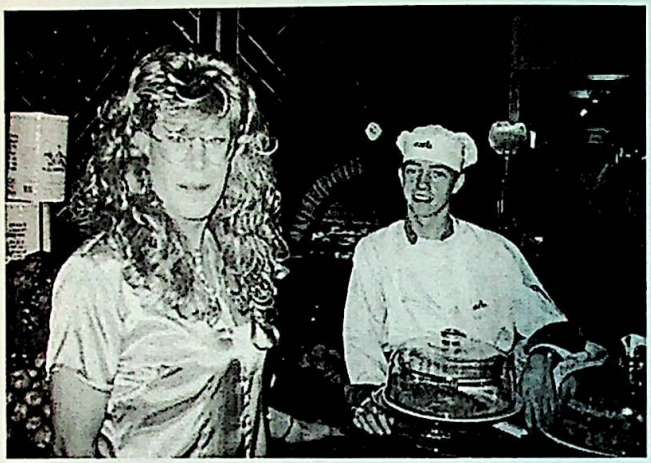
The true value of the Internet to the trans community is that it has accelerated the time frame that would normally have been required to organize and assemble. In doing so, it has speeded up our campaign to be accepted within society as a whole.

These are not insignificant steps forward, but the Internet still can't do the difficult things for us. The moment you shut down the computer, it's still the same world that greets you when you walk out your door. As important as the Internet is to us, and to the world at large for that matter, it's still only information and entertainment. It's not real life. Changing that, or your place in it, is still going to take a lot of blood, sweat and tears.

The "Forno Queen"

By: Chris/Tina

My friend Coreen and I went for dinner one evening to a restaurant that I used to work at in Calgary, Earl's on 16th Avenue. The photo shows me with one of my former work-mates at the ***forno***, an Italian brick oven which is used to cook pizzas and other delicious foods. At this restaurant, I was the ***forno*** cook for quite a while. Outside my work-place, people would look very puzzled whenever I mentioned that I worked as a forno chef at Earl's. Then they would ask me the inevitable question, "what ***is*** a "porno chef" anyway?" After a while, I learned to enunciate much more clearly.



Well, Coreen and I had a great dinner at Earl's that evening. The staff were fabulous, and we had no troubles whatsoever. I was rather surprised, however, that people recognized me immediately after an absence of nearly three years. When I walked in, the bartender Brian yelled out,"Mr. Ita! What are you ***doing***?" None of my former work-mates had ever met me as Chris/tina before. And most knew me only by my work-place nickname, "Mr. Ita." Cooks, being what they are, had given me that name because I speak some Spanish and I would use it "on the line."

One day someone started calling me ***Señorita***. Of course, everyone thought this was quite hilarious. Personally, so did I, and I admit to then being rather delighted with the gender twist. Still, I played up to the joke and patiently insisted, with tongue in cheek, that ***Señor*** was the appropriately gendered term. For example, I said, "If my last name was Ita, one would then say ***Señor*** Ita, if I was a man, and ***Señora*** Ita, or ***Señorita*** Ita, depending if I was a married or unwed woman."

Well, the joke took it's usual bizarre turn in the humour typical of cooks. I became "Señor Ita," and then just "Mr. Ita." Personally, I still prefer "Señorita." In any event, that evening I guess I was ***Señorita, Forno Queen.***

pflag

A peer support group for Parents, Friends and Families of Lesbians and Gays. Meets the 4th Tues. of each month at 7:00 P.M. for business, 7:30 P.M. for support. If you want to talk to someone with confidentiality or need information, call Deb at **286-4094**

TG Books With Canadian Flavour

Submitted By: Stephanie Donaldson

We are pleased to publish the first of four articles listing books describing the trans experience as provided by long time trans community member, supporter and archivist, Stephanie Donaldson.

- ***I once Was A Man, Behold I Am A Woman***
  By: Dianna, as told to Felicity Cochrane
  1972, Pyramid Books, ISBN 515-2649-95
- ***Feelings***
  By: Stephanie Castle
  Perceptions Press, 1992, ISBN 1-895590-03-5
- ***The Edmonton Queen***
  By: Darrin Hagen
  Slipstream Press, ISBN 1-895836-46-8
- ***Nine Lives: The Autobiography of Erica Rutherford***
  Ragweed Press, PEI. ISBN 0-921556-36-5
- ***At Home On The Stroll***
  By: Alexandra Highcrest
  1997, Afred A Knopf, ISBN 0-676-97053-2
  " a trans-woman describes her twenty year experiences as a prostitute in Ontario"
- ***As Nature Made Him, The Boy Raised As A Girl***
  By: John Colapinto
  2000 Harpers Collins Press ISBN 0-00-200047-47

.....Continued on page 26

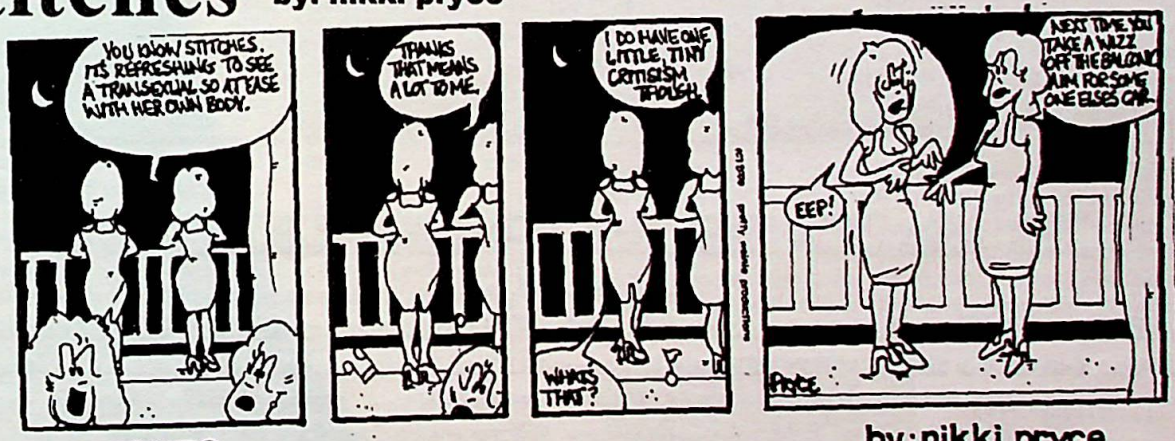
A Blond Joke

Submitted by: Wanda Mechant

A blonde decides to try horseback riding, even though she has had no lessons or prior experience. She mounts the horse, unassisted, and the horse immediately springs into motion. It gallops along at a steady and rhythmic pace, but the blonde begins to slip from the saddle. In terror, she grabs for the horse's mane, but cannot seem to get a firm grip. She tries to throw her arms around the horse's neck, but she slides down the side of the horse anyway. The horse gallops along, seemingly oblivious to its slipping rider.

Finally, giving up her frail grip, the blonde attempts to leap away from the horse and throw herself to safety. Unfortunately, her foot has become entangled in the stirrup, she is now at the mercy of the horse's pounding hooves as her head is struck against the ground over and over. As her head is battered against the ground, she is mere moments away from unconsciousness when to her great fortune..... Frank, the Walmart greeter, sees her dilemma and *unplugs the horse*.

stitches by: nikki pryce



STITCHES by: nikki pryce

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AS NATURE MADE HIM "THE BOY WHO WAS RAISED AS A GIRL"

A book review by Coreen Clark
(© Copywrite 2000) website

This book was previously reviewed earlier this year with a somewhat negative attitude towards the author, and a supportive stance for the main antagonist, Dr. Money. Since I have just finished reading the book myself, I would like to offer this rather contrary perspective on it.

After reading the title of this book, I'm sure many TGForum readers will think, "How lucky can you get?" or "Why couldn't that have been me?!" Well, think again, for all is not at all as blissful as one may imagine. This is truly a sad tale of a normally born child whose life became a tortured existence. Written by John Colapinto and published by Harper Collins Publishers Ltd. in 2000, the author first published an article based on this story in Rolling Stone magazine, December 1997. The fact that the article was so popular, coupled with the readers numerous requests for more details (and the ample supply of them) prompted Mr. Colapinto to write the book.

It chronicles the true-life story of a Canadian child, David Reimer, born on August 22, 1965 as one of a pair of normal, identical twin males. Through a horrific accident, caused by surgical incompetence during an emergency circumcision, his penis was completely burned off in an instant. What is really heartbreaking is that the condition that prompted the "emergency" operation cleared up quickly on its own, in his twin brother. After the accident, his brother's surgery was canceled!

Desperate for respite to their problem, David and his family become innocent pawns in a circus of medical and scientific experiment, debate, and precedent setting.

Enter the infamous Dr. John Money, original member of the Psychohormonal Research Unit of the renowned Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore. The hospital was well known for being "the world's first and largest clinic studying and treating intersexual conditions", while Dr. Money became famous as the founder of the Gender Identity Clinic therein. He was well known for his radical sexual theories and preferences.

The Reimer family just happened to see him on a Canadian talk show in February 1967; long before TG topics had become the staple of television tabloid viewing. Upon calling him, they were relieved that he assured them that their child could be helped. Unbeknownst to the Reimers, Dr. Money had ulterior motives. The classic debate had been raging for some time; of "nurture over nature", whether one's gender identity is a result of their state upon being born or if it is a formed by social upbringing thereafter. Dr. Money was a pioneer of the nurture side, and adamant he was right. He claimed to have substantial proof, but lacked definitive research results. With David Reimer and his twin brother, he finally had a perfect "matched set" with which to prove his theory. David was surgically transformed into Brenda, and the development of his feminization was started.

Through the years, Dr. Money continually reported on the great success of the experiment. So successful was it considered, that the case was accepted as the precedent, and the procedure became the standard treatment for all following cases. It did not help that whenever there was any hint of challenge, Dr. Money's status and fiery temper would shoot the opponent down. The repercussions of his work were significant. For one thing, the whole feminist movement gained strength and their voice grew in potency. If the only difference between a female and male was how they were raised, it stood to reason that women were not being afforded the proper opportunities.

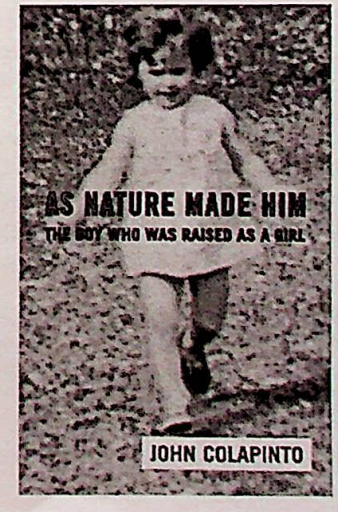
As the years went by, Dr. Money gained fame and fortune. Medical standards were rewritten to coincide with his new "enlightenment". The only problem was things were definitely NOT going well with Brenda! No matter how much everyone tried, Brenda never felt she was girl. As she got older things steadily grew worse. Incredible social problems and isolation developed in her and brought her to the brink of suicide. The effects reached out and nearly destroyed the lives of every member of her family. Brenda and her brother were kept in the dark as to what had happened, and how famous they were in the medical community.

The main protagonists in this whole mess are Dr. McKenty and Dr. Milton Diamond. Dr. McKenty was one of the last of many psychiatrist that treated Brenda. Her sympathy and loving ways gained Brenda's trust; a feat none other could achieve.

Dr. Diamond was the only one who publicly disagreed with Dr. Money's conclusions, right from the start. The fact that, at that time, he was only a graduate student prevented him from being heard in the shadow of Dr. Money's renown. What is ironic is Dr. Money's own doctoral thesis proved to be some of the best proof against his future claims! In the end, and only in recent years, his ideas on "nurture over nature" were finally rejected in light of the overwhelming evidence.

Many of us in the TG community feel we were born in a body contrary to the gender we feel we are. Imagine the exact opposite... being born in the correct body, but then being forced to change to the converse.

This is a "must read" for all TG folks. It reads as a history of the medical profession's attitudes and developments in treating gender issues. Certainly, numerous familiar names arise within the book to play their parts in the whole controversial subject; Dr. Freud (Freud!), Dr. Benjamin (Benjamin Standards), Christine Jorgenson (early post-op, 1952), Virginia Prince (transsexual activist), etc. In the end, the list of those involved becomes so large that it can be a bit confusing. Generally, the book is well written, and an easy, quick read due to the totally absorbing and fast paced story. It is truly a fascinating chronicle, no matter what your opinion of the main players.



Imagine.... "being born in the correct body, but then being forced to change to the converse!"
A must read!

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Glamour's Q & A:

Do you have a beauty problem that's just driving you crazy? Write your burning questions to Cassandra and she will try to find workable solutions for you! You may write to Cassandra care of Crossroads Magazine.

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Pucker, Pucker and More Pucker, Thin Lips are a Drag!

Q **I have very thin lips. Is there a method I can use to make them appear fuller or larger? I don't want to have surgery unless I absolutely have to. Cassie, I'm hoping you have the answer. JJM. Calgary**

Well I sure do have at least one answer for you JJM. Cassandra has very thin lips as well, yet you would almost never know it unless you looked real close. The first thing I did was study lip shapes & colours in fashion magazines. I even made a reference file of all my favorites. Then I started practicing to see if I could copy them. I experimented with many shades of different colours. The ones I found worked best for me were the dark solid shades without the frosty look. I will explain how to add that later.

Here is Cassandra's method. First after putting on my foundation, I apply a fairly heavy application of warm red brown cheek blush to the under side of my lower lip. So from the lip line to the chin crease, curving up on both sides to the lower corners of my mouth. It can be quite dark, the effect is that my lower lip now appears to be much larger than it actually is. I then use my powder puff to set and blend the new accent colour in with my foundation. The next step is to apply your lipstick. Most make-up artists will tell you to define the shape of your lips by drawing on the intended shape with lip liner first, then apply lipstick. I have never found this to work well for me, but you should try it anyway, just to find out for yourself. In any case after putting on my lip colour, I roll my lips around to spread it out evenly above and below my natural lip lines. Now I use the appropriate darker shade of lip liner to define and broaden the shape of my new lips. I use a small water colour brush with long bristles to sharpen the outer edge of the lip liner and then to blend the inner side of the line into my lipstick.

The last touch is to frost my lower lip. I use a silver coloured eyeliner pencil to do this step. I start where my lips meet naturally and feather it out to the edge of my natural lip line. This not only gives the appearance of large lips, it also disguises my natural lip line, blending it into the new larger theatrical shape I have just painted on my face. I have found that the silver eyeliner acts as a set for my lipstick, and it is not unusual for it to last all night in good condition.

So there you go JJM, I hope this works for you. It is a bit of work to learn to do at first, but then again darling, what part of boys trying to be girls isn't. The key is tell yourself that you can do it, and then just keep experimenting until you get what you want. Later, with practice it takes much less time to achieve the look you want. **Good luck JJM from Calgary.**

If you have a idea or a submission that you would like to have published in Crossroads e-mail it to mhart@webminder.com or snail mail it to:

Michelle Hart c/o
Crossroads Magazine
Site 9, Box 17, RR#1,
Okotoks, Ab. TOL-1T0

Band-Aids!

.Can't shave your legs or just don't have the time.
.Put on a opaque pair of flesh toned panty hose. Then put on one or two more pairs of sheer hose to complete the look. If you are going for the nude look close to your skin tone, then three pairs will be required in most cases.
.Darker colours going towards black, or patterned hose should allow you to just use the opaque hose first and then just one pair to finish the look you want.
.Voila darlings, great looking legs in a flash with no shaving required!

.Got a fashion question or a problem? Ask Cassandra, she will find the an-

Continued from page 17... form of solidarity and wholeness which transcends the divisions of humans into men and women." (http://www.gendys.mcmail.com/welgndys/conf/trilogy/winkte.htm)

To be sacred in the Lakota way means to have ones feet firmly planted in the earth, to know who you are and to know where you are physically standing and to know that place is sacred because you are standing there.

CONCLUSION

When our societies finally recognize the transgendered person, as the person he/she is, we will open ourselves to the possibility of new unique, wonderful, and as yet not completely realized, contributions to society. By this recognition of the sacredness of the transgendered person, we will be able to recognize the sacredness in all humans. We will be able to live in a world where all possibilities exist, where it will be possible for all of us to see ourselves as something precious and thus the violent outbursts of fear, ignorance and hatred will disappear and no one will have to fight for his/her place in society, everyone will have a place, a special and sacred place. Indian people say, "Everyone is sacred, we have no throw away people."

The transgendered, the winkte who observes herself, who reflects upon herself, and who recalls her near or distant past, instead of giving herself over to the ordinary activities of life is free to be herself. The failure to satisfy this need will and does compromise all possible equilibrium. Even if she incurs grave dangers in meeting this need, it is even more dangerous to refuse this summons, to be who one is born to be, a winkte.

To be a winkte, to be transgendered, has little to do with sexual orientation and a great deal to do with gender identity. To be transgendered is to deny the rigid binary of political monotheism and to embrace that which is sacred within. It is to open oneself to the totality of oneself and thereby to the other. The connection between the traditional notion of the winkte and the contemporary transgendered community, lies, I believe in this spiritual realm where one accepts oneself and this acceptance opens all other possibilities. When society understands gender as a continuum and not as some rigidly defined system, we will finally be able to develop wacin kiciyuzapi, Mutual Respect for all of Wakan Tanka's Creations.

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Hey! What's Happening?

Community events from around Western Canada

Feb 9th	- Rooks - 10:00pm
Feb 10th	- Midnight Cafe (Roxy & Hell-on-Heels B'Day) at 10:30pm
Feb. 10th	- Illusions, Valentine Party, & welcome to the new Illusions Club Rooms, Calgary
Feb 18th	- Boyztown - 12:00am
Feb 23rd	- Illusions Social, clothes swap & sale. proceeds to go to the Club to cover some of the costs of the new renovations. Calgary
Feb 24th	- Midnight Cafe - 10:00pm
Feb 24th	- Illusions Winterfest, Edmonton
Mar 10th	- Illusions Open House—8:00pm
Mar 10th	- Midnight Cafe - 10:30pm
Mar 23rd	- Rooks (Campaign begins) - 10:00pm
Mar 24th	- Midnight Café (Campaign Show) - at 10:30pm
Mar 25th	- Boyztown(Campaign Show) - 12:00am
Mar 30th	- Illusions Social, theme to be announced Calgary
Mar 31st	- Midnight Café (campaign Show) - at 10:30pm
Apr 7th	- Midnight Café (Campaign Show) - at 10:30pm
Apr 14th	- Midnight Cafe (VOTING) - 10:30pm Voting is from noon until midnight.
Apr 18th	- Court Show at the Midnight starts at 7:00pm
Apr 19th	- In-Town Show - Midnight Cafe - 9:00pm
Apr 20th	- Out-of-town Show at the Quality hotel & Conference Centre - starts at 9:00pm $7.00 cover charge at door.
Apr 21st	- The 25th Annual Charity Ball - at the Quality Hotel & Conference Centre - at 6:00pm sharp!

******* If you have an event or series of events coming up in the future please take a few moments to write them down and submit them to Crossroads for publication.***

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Using Tattoo Cover

By: Coreen

Hi Cassandra, I have had experience with using the very tattoo cover you talked about in last issue's "Glamorous Q & A". I would like to offer my experiences with using it, compared to other products.

When I was still a rather new Illusions member, I was disappointed with the success of hiding my beard shadow. This was inspite of having taken an excellent makeup lesson with Bryon of Salon 512, who has been one of your advertisers. He went through my makeup and we made "keep" and "chuck" piles. He showed me how to apply my makeup by doing one side of my face, then making me do the other under his guidance... what a great way to learn! As we progressed, all was recorded on a sheet of paper with a face on it, using the actual products we were using.

I had the lesson the very day I was to attend Illusions for the first time, with the idea of heading to the club from there en-femme. I chickened out in doing that, which became a bonus because I got to re-practise what I had just learned from Bryan only hours earlier. A comment he had made struck me. He said in time, I would reject some of the things that he had shown me, and would develop my own techniques. He is truly a master, so I doubted "lil 'o me" could ever go beyond his guidance.

I faithfully, rather roboticly, followed his instructions for some time. He was right! In time, I started to question certain aspects and, like so many of us, started an adventure in exploring other avenues.

Although my beard was being hidden fairly well under normal conditions, what bothered me to no end was that in photos, the flash would burn right through and expose my "Fred Flinstone" shadow. Now, I haven't met a TG who doesn't like having their picture taken, so you can see this was a major dilemma!

In observing photos of other members, it became apparent that those who used the Dermablend line were completely protected from the "evil" flash. Thus, my next step was to obtain a full set of it; beard concealer (Chroma 1), foundation (Medium Beige 2.5), and their setting powder ("...sheer, colorless..."). It covered excellently, and my photos improved accordingly, at least as far as hiding the beard!

The problem was, however, in real life (IE: NOT in photos) I found that on myself and others, Dermablend made one's face white as ghost and looked rather pasty... not very flattering! I was moving from the "more pictures of me, me!" to "let's get out in the general public!", so this would not do.

I continued to check out other members, looking for what I thought was the best technique. The infamous Krystal Steel was the one I thought had the best results, so approached her and asked her how she did it. She was kind enough to invite me to dinner at her place, after which, she showed me her method.

It turned out she used the very tattoo cover you are looking for: KRYOLAN Tattoo Cover #5081, Color 5W. She used it as both the beard cover and her foundation, using very little for the latter. She showed me how to apply it, and I continued to use it from there on.

At meetings, Krystal herself would comment on how I wasn't doing a very good job, as my shadow was still not eliminated. I tried and tried to improve, and even started trying it with the other beard covers under it, but it wasn't working. Then, one night, the mystery was solved... it turned out that Krystal had neglected to inform me that she had already completed electrolysis on her beard!... doh!

So, I was back on my search again, trying all kinds of different products (ie: Max Factor Pan Stick... too oily), in various combinations. I slowly started to get better and started to feel like I might be becoming some kind of expert. I ended up going back to the Ben Nye products and started trying the various colors (they sell some four color packs that let you experiment).

I finally zeroed in my ideal shade, CC-3 Medium "Corvette", and was just about to pat myself on the back when I decided to dig out that old sheet from Bryon. Sure enough, I had ended only on slight shade from what he had chosen for me... years ago: CC-4 Deep! I realized just who the expert (still) really was! Still, there was no shame in going through the whole process myself, honing my skills.

To date, I still use the Ben Nye product in CC-3 Medium. The exception is that I will use a bit darker shade, FS-3 Olive "Five O'Sharp" (the same as Cassandra!) during the peak of summer, and my skin is more tanned. Even with their products, getting the correct shade is crucial. If it isn't just right for you, your beard will come through.

My foundation product has gone through a similar evolution. I now swear by Revlon Color Stay (don't get in on your clothes! wash IMMEDIATELY if you do!!). Thinking the shade I was using was too light, I tried going darker and darker with it. Finally I realized that was not the problem. The darker I went, the more green or olive it appeared. That's when I discovered that not many products on the market were designed for those who have a rather reddish or rouge complexion, like myself.

It struck me to try using blush all over my face to give the correct color for me. I had an old one that I was about to throw out because it was just too subtle for a blusher: Revlon "Soft Spoken Pink". Low and behold if it wasn't perfect! Not only did it give my face a more natural tone, it also magically helped reduce the last traces of my beard shadow by blending the transition line. I apply the blush after the beard cover and foundation, but before powdering.

Ben Nye products are carried by B&D Emporium and Don's Hobby shop, both in Calgary. The information on the packs say "Ben Nye Makeup, Ben Nye Co. Inc, LA, CA 90016". Their catalog can be viewed at http://www.wyb.com/makeup.html

For those who want to try the tattoo cover (who knows, it might be great for you), the pack says "KRYOLAN SF, CA 94103". I had to order mine from B.C. from:

Act-1 Theatrical & Dance Supply
Robson St, Vancouver
(604) 687-0737

They took my charge card number over the phone, and shipped it to my home address.

TG Books, continued from page 21....

- **Prisoner Of Gender**
  Katherine Johnson & Stephanie Castle
  1997, Perceptions Press, ISBN 1-895590-10
- **Guy To Goddess: An intimate look at drag queens**
  By: Worbury & Richardson
  1994, ISBN 1-55110-254-4
- **Guidelines, A Manuel For Trans-sexuals and Their Caregivers**
  Published By: The "Zenith Foundation"
  1997, ISBN 1-895590-22-1

Many thanks to Stephanie for taking the time to provide this information. Look for more in the next issue of Crossroads Magazine!

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The Great Escape!

Or Leaving The Closet Behind

By: Michelle Cassandra Hart

This is the first in a number of articles designed to help explain the emotions of closeted trans folk and offer them support and suggestions should they decide to try and emerge into the light of day. My own experience since my escape has been nothing short of fantastic. As I peeled away the multi layered vales of secrecy and deceit a whole new way of living was made available to me. One would never have guessed that such a thing was possible. To those that know me well, my experiences are common place by now, yet many new viewers from a distance are in awe of my experience. It is not uncommon for people to write and include the comment that I appear self assured etc. etc. In order to show, that we all come from fragile beginnings, myself included, and that self assurance, along with many other things is an acquired art, I am reprinting my story as published in the "Old Illusions Newsletter" so many years ago. Just before we get to that, there are a few things I would like to say.

It is very easy to forget your closeted beginnings once success has touched you and you leave the closet behind. It is therefore very easy to forget how difficult it was to make the decision to begin the process of accepting your trans-genderism as a permanent fact of life, and then begin the process of putting it in perspective in order to deal with it in the first place. All people who desire to leave the dark destructive secrecy of the closet are faced first with the need for self acceptance. If you can't accept yourself, you can't expect others to accept you. So self acceptance is an important requirement in a successful escape. I can't stress this point enough.

Once out and the past begins to melt away, your next project will be to learn how to keep your feet on the ground. You will need to learn the art ***of balance and separation***, if you are to survive with some semblance of who you once were. ***Balance*** is the tool you will use to help you weave your way through all the new choices you will come in contact with as you proceed. ***Separation*** is the tool you will use to keep the euphoria of your new experiences in check or perspective, so that those that have known you will want to move on with you. You know who I'm talking about, spouse, children, friends, work mates, business associates, siblings and parents. Despite how you might feel guiltwise, these people, in most cases, will still want to know you after your secret is out, and you will still want to know them. So keep that it mind what ever you decide to do. Forget the idea, that on some particular day, you can cancel the entirety of past life and declare yourself a new person. To do so is a fools game. It can't happen that way. Our past experience, no matter how miscast we may feel, will always effect our actions in the future. Denial of that reality, in my view, can only create further distortions in our development as an individual.

"If you are a person who feels that by imparting the knowledge of your trans-genderism to others that you are or would be creating harm, then I would ask you to take a moment and consider how much harm you have already created for others by keeping it a secret."

One of the most destructive aspects of living part of your life in secret is to maintain a lack of trust in others. That lack of faith nibbles away daily at our own self-esteem constantly and creates distortions in our lives and how we deal with ourselves and others. If you are a person who feels that by imparting the knowledge of your trans-genderism to others that you are or would be creating harm, then I would ask you to take a moment and consider how much harm you have already created for others by keeping it a secret. There is no easy out, there is only dealing with it. The topical question is how, but that is a detail and only one part of the foundation upon which your house will be built.

Boy or girl, the urge to cross-dress or to even try to change your sex is the uninvited dilemma. It stands square as a conflict between how you have been raised to live and how you feel you need to live. If you are trans-gendered, then there is no avoiding it. It is not an option as some would promote it to be. There is no cure. If you have the gender dysphoria bug, then you have it and that's it. The only relief to your guilt ridden pain is self acceptance. Sorry, but that is the way it is! No pills are available. You either continue to go around in circles or you decide to escape. So as we start my story, let me just say one more time something I have said many times before. We (our emotion) have been part of the world since the first day, we have existed throughout all time on all continents, within all races, as part of all religions, we have as a people have participated in all political creeds and we will still be here on the last day. We have nothing to be ashamed of and in reality nothing to feel guilty about. Go grrrls and boyys, be happy, start to find your place.

Michelle's Story

By: Michelle Cassandra Hart

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For those people who already know me, I can probably put some words in your mouths right now...such as like where did the name Cassandra come from? Well that's another story, but on the other hand, where did the name Michelle come from is an even a better story! So, lets talk about where Michelle came from and talk about Cassandra later!

Back in the mid sixties when I was sixteen or seventeen (a girl should never be definite on her age), my sister received a wig for Christmas and for some unexplained reason I wanted it! Like, where did that emotion come from? Honestly to this day, I can't tell you! The only thing I can say about it, is at this point in my life I know longer care! It took me awhile, but I eventually got my hands on that wig one afternoon after school and I went into the main bath and put it on. I was young then and had no facial hair. When I looked in the mirror...Well... I liked what I saw! So, for the next year or two, whenever I could get the chance, I would run home after school and put on the wig. As time went on I added a white frilly blouse, a brown leather halter top dress, chocolate panty hose, brown open toed pumps...and guess what??? Yes!!! Liquid Covergirl and silver lipstick!!! WOOOOO!!!! Well, remember this was the sixties and at this time this was right in style! I had a great time and then the inevitable happened, my sister grew up and eventually threw "MY CLOTHES AWAY" and when she did I died and went to purgatory!

One of Michelle's first pictures, no smiles yet!

The realities of life can be such a trial when you are a crossdresser! Well for a long time, I never dressed that completely again. To be honest, I had my emotions about it, right? Wrong? A sin? I didn't know. What would my Grandmother say if she knew?...My Father?...My Mother?...Brother?...Or worse

yet, my sister?...After all I had been wearing her clothes? Oh boy...Oh Girl! Prior to all of this happening... when I was about 12, my Dad decided to move us from Eastern Canada to Alberta. It was his thinking that it was the land of opportunity and in many ways it has turned out to be just that. But at the time I hated it. For one thing, the girls didn't have pigtails and the only thing I knew about girls that I knew at that time in my life...was how to run around the corner of the schoolhouse and give them a yank on their pigtails! Ouch! That was how it was down east in those days. So, when I met these blonde hair Calgary girl kids that sat in class primping their hair, was it any wonder that I forgot how to say the "Hail Mary" during the Rosary. I was a little too back woods for these very sophisticated kids and I soon became the butt of my class jokes. A child that was used to sliding down snow banks, building forts, tree houses, or better yet jumping from tree top to tree top or on a dare would jump off a train bridge and swim his heart out against the out flowing tide, gave it up!!!!

I discovered books and went underground and there I stayed for a long time. I started sniffing glue (this is why I probably have blonde roots) and eventually kicked the habit. I finished high school, and went to college, went into business, grew a moustache and got married. I helped give birth to two wonderful children then got divorced. Like so many young people my early life was a mixture of good and bad things. The reality is that I never lost the urge to dress either! Ummm...Try as I might...no matter what I thought or did...I just couldn't stop! For years I was hidden away in something we call the closet. My dressing was incomplete and at best could be described as perverse. Let us say that I felt it was a condition that I was unhappy with and personally felt was deviant! What to do? I didn't know and remember that this was just a part of my life, but as such, what a total disaster. How could you blame me? In over twenty years of being a TV all I could find to read on the newsstands.. was a bunch of American Pornography!! You know the type, "TV LOVE" or something like that. Is it any wonder that with this kind of junk being the only thing that there was something desperately wrong with you. During this time and a few years after my divorce after my first wife..I met "B" and we got married. It wasn't a romance from heaven, oh no...it was straight out of the movies. We met on a blind date, we went home to my house and we've never been apart since! "B" helped me put my life back together after my divorce, BUT, I never told her about my transvestism and it stayed a secret for almost 16 years! Boy, wasn't I a slick can of juice! Oh, I wanted to tell her, but what was I to say? Oh, say "B", every once in awhile, I like to sneak down to the basement, put on a black bra and blow my load.....NOPE! I knew that that just wouldn't cut it. I knew that she would just not be able to understand or accept that kind of activity. I also knew that in reality these activities were partly based on my lack of commitment or insecurity about completing the cycle. I had an urge that I could not control or make go away. I was not facing up to the realities of it either so it was also personally dissatisfying. In 1988, I decided to accept myself for what I was, that among many other things in life, I was a transvestite! It was about Christmas time that I felt secure in buying makeup and clothes...and...yes, a wig! Wooooo...I still have it. I have worn it on a few occasions to Illusions socials. Shortly after Christmas I engineered "B" out of the house for a few days and put it all on. Like so many years before I looked back in the mirror and...oh...I loved what I saw! I am not ashamed to say that, my thoughts were not of arrogance, rather, they were an expression of relief...sweet, sweet relief!!!

I was still not Michelle in those days, but my cross-dressing activities felt better to me as I went on. I was finally surrendering to the realities of my situation. In time I stopped fretting about what I was doing and started concentrating on how -to do it. Then, I found my first Illusions newsletter. After reading it and realizing that it came from close to home, well, picture what I might look like after just being struck by lightning! By the time I got my hands on the second one...I knew that this is were I belonged. How to get there? I was in such awe of everyone that I saw pictured there. They were like movie stars to me and I felt I was a little nobody that wanted to be in the movies. **...next issue**

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& Wig Care and Design
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Web Sites of Interest

North Beach Leather...USA
http://www.northbeachleather.com/spring2.html
Adult Fetish
http://www.adultcheck.com/gen_links/fetish.html
Breast Enlarging
http://www.newwomyn.com/
Girls Around The World
http://www.geocities.com/~urnotalone/around.htm
Walk On The Wildside
http://www.wildside.org/
Georgette
G_nickel@cybernet-ag.de
Crossroads Magazine (under construction)
http://www.darkmall.com/crossroads
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ISCCA & SA
http:www.fortunecity.com/village/
rockhudson/584/index.html
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www.northbound.com
Demask Bizarre Rubber
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Great Boots & Shoes at great prices !
www.howcool.com
Illusions Social Club of Alberta
Http://www.geocities.com/ILLUSIONSX42
Gender PAC
Owner_iyfonline@gpac.org

f you know of any interesting websites, please submit them to the editor. E-mail: **mhart@webminder.com**

NEWS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

Beauty Queen Abdicates, Admits She Is Male

Updated: Fri, Nov 17 08:22 AM EST

BANGKOK (Reuters) - Kesaraporn Duangsawan captured the hearts of the judges and walked away with 6,000 baht ($138) as first runner-up in a Thai beauty contest this month -- until organizers discovered the beauty queen was a man.

TransTeen's School Dress Allowed

PlanetOut News Staff Friday, October 13, 2000

A Massachusetts judge dressed down a school district for barring a gender identity disordered student from wearing female attire.

A Plymouth County, Massachusetts Superior Court judge on October 12 ruled that a transgendered 15-year-old must be allowed to attend public school presented in her self-identified gender, finding that to do otherwise would be sex discrimination and citing the youth's First Amendment right to freedom of expression. The ruling is believed to be the first of its kind in the state. The school itself had referred the teen known in court as "Pat Doe" to a therapist who diagnosed her with gender identity disorder, but school administrators viewed her wearing of women's clothing as just another manifestation of "a pattern of disruptive behavior." It appears very likely that the Brockton School Department will appeal.

Before the case was heard, the school district had asked Judge Linda Giles to recuse herself because she is a lesbian. Giles responded that the case was not about sexual orientation but about gender identity disorder, and that, "I've examined my head and heart and I see no reason to recuse myself."

Pat first began to wear women's clothing and makeup to school early in 1999 when she was in seventh grade. Sometimes the clothing included tight skirts and high-heeled shoes, and at one semi-formal dance a "slinky" black dress. This caused confrontations, school officials said. Pat was repeatedly sent home to change, and when she began eighth grade in 1999, she was required to report first each day to the principal for approval of her appearance. In court, school officials acknowledged that female students dressed similarly were neither disciplined nor barred from attending. During the 1999 - 2000 school year Pat dropped out, claiming the principal had created a hostile environment. This year after being told Pat could not enroll if she wore women's clothing, Pat's grandmother "Jane Doe" filed suit against the school district with the help of Boston-based Gay & Lesbian Advocates & Defenders (GLAD). Pat is repeating the eighth grade with a tutor at home.

Pat was also three times suspended for using the women's restrooms after being told she must not. Other students told the Boston Globe that it was safer there for Pat than in the men's restrooms, where she was verbally harassed and there was the possibility of violence.

Pat was often disruptive, school officials said. She would dance and yell in the hall, which they viewed as trying to draw attention to herself. Once she sparked a confrontation by blowing kisses at a male student, and another time by grabbing a male student's buttocks. School administrators all the way up to the district superintendent believe they gave Pat every consideration, but that they have to consider the educational needs of hundreds of other students as well.

The school district's attorney Edward Lennox had said in court that Pat "will show off, apply makeup in front of other students," arguing there was "a pattern of flamboyance and disruption," that it was a "pattern of behavior that has been disruptive, not an isolated incident," and that wearing women's clothes "will be disruptive to the educational process." Lennox's remarks led Judge Giles to ask just what constitutes "flamboyance" and whether schools should limit it, comparing it to the days when students wore leather jackets which were symbolic of gangs.

The school referred Pat in 1999 to therapist Judith Havens, who reported to the court that it would be "medically and clinically necessary for [Pat] to wear clothing consistent with female gender and that failure to do so could cause harm to [Pat's] mental health."

Judge Giles agreed, writing that for Pat wearing women's clothes "is not merely a personal preference but a necessary symbol of her very identity" and that to force her to do otherwise would mean "the stifling of a person's selfhood merely because it causes some members of the community discomfort." She wrote that should Doe misbehave, she could be disciplined as other students would be, but not for wearing attire the school would accept on a female student. Rather than damaging the educational interests of other students, she wrote that, "exposing children to diversity at an early age serves the important social goals of increasing their ability to tolerate differences and teaching them respect for everyone's unique personal experience."

GLAD staff attorney Jennifer Levi, who argued the case for Pat Doe, said in a statement that, "As the first reported decision [in Massachusetts] addressing the rights of a transgender student to express her gender identity in school, it is tremendously important. We know that a large number of transgender students face serious hostility from teachers and administrators who lack a basic understanding about gender identity. This case confirms that a school may not exert its authority over a student simply to enforce stereotyped ideas of how boys and girls should look. Nor can a school's discomfort with the fact that a biologically male student has a female gender identity, justify enforcing a dress code in a discriminatory way."

Interviewing parents and students after the ruling, the Boston Globe found that most were willing to "live and let live." One of Pat's friends said, "Boy or girl, he's still our friend."

But one mother said she'd given her 14-year-old son permission to "beat up" Pat should she touch him. The mother said, "In my opinion I don't think it's right. [My son] shouldn't have to put up with being touched. If [Pat] wants to be treated fairly he should wear men's clothes."

Eddie will finally meet Emmy in Austria

-- Susan Wloszczyna USA TODAY, a division of Gannett Co. Inc

Where was British transvestite comic Eddie Izzard this month when he heard he had won two Emmys for his HBO special Dress to Kill? "Up in the Austrian Alps, in a big deserted room with lots of drink, trying to watch the show online." When that failed, "we listened to a live feed on a mobile cellphone. It was a magical night in a way, up in the mountains."

Izzard, 38, in Europe for the espionage comedy All the Queen's Men, will get his polished fingers (red this week) on his awards on the set today, presented by movie co-star Matt Le Blanc.
Izzard describes Men, about three Brits led by an American who pose as female workers in a German code machine factory, as "Some Like It Hot meets Guns of Navarone."

Le Blanc has declared Izzard "his favorite tranvestite." Has Izzard declared Le Blanc his favorite friend on Friends? "I can't really say that because Jennifer Aniston and Brad Pitt came to my gig in Los Angeles, and she's a big fan."

Readers Letters, continued from page 4...
Mexico City experiences, as I have also been out a lot down there too. Is there a deadline I should work towards? Finally, I would be honoured to exchange website links.

Peace & Solidarity, Chris/Tina

Dear Chris,
Thanks for your letter and access to your writings. We look forward to your return, be sure to call ahead. Say Hi to Mena from us.

Keep the Faith, Michelle

Hello Michelle & Brenda!
Thanks for the latest issue of Crossroads magazine. It's absolutely the best publication around here for TG girls. I regret that I have missed a lot of exciting times at Illusions, due to the imposition of my employment, (I'm still in the great white north!)
However, I hope to see you and all the other girls in the not too distant future, I just don't know when. Till then, please find enclosed my cheque for my subscription renewal.

Love & Best Wishes, April

CLASSIFIED ADS

Wigs for sale,

- Rene of Paris, long chestnut brown with short bangs. Original cost $210.00, hardly worn, excellent condition & comes with box. ***Asking $50.00***
- Wigland, china girl/page boy, dark brown, skin toned skull cap makes parting very realistic, nice bangs. An excellent easy care wig for beginners. I should know it was my first! Perfect condition. ***Asking $25.00***
- Blond mop! A real old wig, long curls, I have used for years to learn how to style my better quality wigs. ***Asking $10.00*** ***Call Michelle at 938-2539, evenings***

TG Rights; continued from page 15
weapon to discipline, intimidate, and divide working people -- in the same way they use sexism, racism, and homophobia.
Legal protections won't make these things go away by themselves, but they can serve the working class and its allies in forging stronger unity in the struggle against exploitation and oppression.

Please feel free to repost and reprint this article, with due acknowledgement to the author and **People's Voice.**

Some other relevant sites on the Web

People's Voice On-line
International Foundation for Gender Education (IFGE)
Xpressions
Canadian Task Force for Transgendered Law Reform
GenderPac
Press For Change
It's Time America!
Intersex Society of Canada
Intersex Society of North America

CLUBS, ORGANIZATIONS

The Cornbury Society
Box 3745, Vancouver, B.C. V6B-3Z1
Ph-1-604-862-1321 or E-mail at:
Cornbury@bc.sympatico.ca
Web: Http://www.3dcom.com/tg/cornbury/

Zenith Foundation
Box 46, 8415 Granville St.
Vancouver, BC V6P-4Z9

Illusions Calgary
426-8th Ave. S.E. Calgary, Ab. T2G-0L7
Ph-1-403-265-7789 or E-mail at:
Bnblethr@cadvision.com
Web: http://www.geocities.com/westhollywood/village/5276/

Illusions Social Club, Edmonton
E-mail: edm_illusions@juno.com

Illusions Social Club, Saskatchewan
Ph-1-306-761-0414 ... ask for Shirley
E-mail: xxxxxx@sk.sympatico.ca

Masquerade, of Winnipeg
C/o Lady Godiva Boutique
832 - Corydon Ave. Winnipeg, MB. R3M-0Y2
E-mail: shandi_strong@hotmail.com

Canadian Crossdressers Club - Wildside (Toronto)
C/o Wildside Boutique
161 Gerrad St. E. Toronto, Ontario, M5A-2E4
1-416-921-6112 or E-mail: info@wildside.org

Xpressions
Box 223, Station A, Toronto, Ontario, M5W-1B2
Ph-1-416-410-6949, E-mail: xpressions@xpressions.org
Web: www.xpressions.org

ATG (Atlantic) in Halifax
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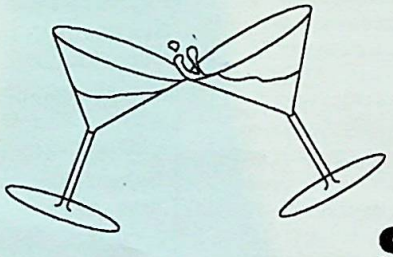

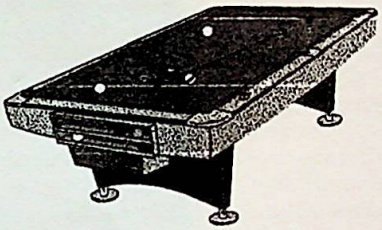

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